

## The Survivalist – Introduction

The tired old man sat staring at his computer screen. His mind drifted as he thought back on his life and the fact that he was a so-called 'Survivalist'. When had that all started? Maybe in high school, he thought, remembering that every time a tornado warning had come on TV he had filled a canteen and hid in the basement shower room. Or maybe, it was later when he was in the military and began to accumulate firearms. Not really, he decided, it was when he was married to his first wife. After having nearly starved while he worked for Target Stores, he and his wife had bought 2 sets of steel shelving and filled the shelving with food.

New at this business of storing food, they had made lists of foods and purchased them in case lots from Safeway. They had lots of food including things they rarely ate. In time, the food all went away, except for things like the 36 cans of tomato paste and other assorted items. They'd divorced and he'd remarried. His new wife wasn't into the food-storing thing, but neither was she opposed to his owning firearms.

He had built his gun 'collection' until he had 23 firearms. He was really into the lever action Winchesters and he had a .22LR and .22WRM in the 9422 plus model 94's in the 30-30 and .375 Winchester calibers. He also had 2 Marlins, a .357 Magnum and a .44 magnum. He didn't much favor bolt-action rifles and had only 1, a Winchester model 70 .30-06. He had 2 Remington 870 riot guns and 2 Ruger Mini-14's; one blued and the other stainless. And, there was the AR-7 survival rifle in .22LR and the 12 gauge and 20 gauge Remington 870's with hunting barrels.

Also there were the handguns. He had 4 Ruger single action revolvers, a .22LR Bearcat, a .22LR Single Six Convertible, a .357 Magnum Blackhawk and a .44 magnum Super Blackhawk. He had 2 Colt Pythons, one with a 4" barrel and one with a 2½" barrel. He liked the Browning Hi-Power and had acquired one in a weak moment. His Chief's Special and his Colt Detective's Special in .38 caliber rounded out his handguns.

He had 11 30 round mags for the Mini-14's and 3 mags for the Browning. He had a minimum of 4 boxes of ammo in every caliber except for the 5.56x45mm and the 12-gauge ammo. He had about 1,600 rounds of the 5.56x45mm and a case of 3" 15 pellet 00 buckshot. He figured he was loaded for bear.

His wife had relented when they started using bottled water and he had 30 5-gallon bottles of Arrowhead stacked in a rack he made by wiring used plastic Arrowhead cases together that his driver had thoughtfully supplied him. Along the other wall of their garage, he had four sets of the 6' high steel shelving filled to overflowing with goods from Costco.

The only objection his wife had was to the 50 pounds of pinto beans and 50 pounds of rice. She absolutely hated pinto beans. He tried to pacify her by buying 3 10-pound boxes of beans from Smart and Final Iris, one each of navy beans, great northern beans and kidney beans. They rotated the food and water and the oldest items were

kept to the front. He was better at buying what they ate and eating what they bought, but he still had a few items that would last them for years that he'd only purchased because they were on sale.

She had reluctantly allowed him to buy a 7,000-watt generator and he stored 35 gallons of gasoline for it. Because they had several oil lamps, he bought 10 2-gallon jugs of kerosene. A couple of times the generator had come in handy, like the time the guy hit the light pole and their power was down for 22 hours. They couldn't run the air conditioner, but they kept the freezer, 2 refrigerators and table lamps burning.

There were still more guns he wanted like a Springfield Armory M1A or two. He would have preferred the DSA SA58 FAL, but living in California, his options were limited. He wouldn't even consider a main battle rifle that didn't have a detachable magazine and that meant that it was the M1A or nothing. He was ready to buy one but his wife had come to him and started pressing him to buy her a computer, so the rifle would have to wait 3 months.

It was March 2004 and the news didn't look good at all. Terrorists had blown up a train in Madrid and the Israelis had killed the Spiritual leader of Hamas. The Pakistanis had a high-level al-Qaeda official trapped in a small village in NE Pakistan. Fox news, or was it CNN, had talked a day or two earlier about al-Qaeda having suitcase nukes. The Shi-ite Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani was threatening to boycott the UN under the current US proposed interim Iraqi government.

And, his youngest son was over in Kosovo. Relieved that his son hadn't been to Iraq, the man still worried. Then, in the last few days, the situation had blown up in Kosovo and his son had been pelted with rocks and Molotov Cocktails. It was almost as bad as if his son had been sent to Iraq. It was anybody's guess who would win the fall election. Would George Bush prevail? He had been falling steadily in the polls and was alienating much of the electorate. Would Senator John Kerry win? God help us if he did, the man thought.

His mental ramblings continued and he began to imagine the what-ifs occurring. What if al-Qaeda snuck in some of those suitcase nukes? Where would they strike? Washington? New York City? Los Angeles? All three?

What if Hamas blamed the US for the Israeli act that resulted in al-Sistani's death? Would Hamas attack the US? Would they get suitcase nukes from al-Qaeda?

What if the Palestinians forced a major revolt in Israel and the Israelis attacked the Palestinians in force? Would the Arab countries go to war with Israel? And if they did and Israel found itself losing the war would the Israelis resort to the nuclear option?

Would the extra 2,000 troops that NATO was sending to Kosovo restore order between the Albanian majority and Serbian minority? Or, would the dispute escalate and would the President mishandle this situation like he had mishandled Iraq? Good old George

was ok, sort of. He had reneged on his promise to the American gun owners. He had perhaps misrepresented the facts in pressing for a war with Iraq to unseat his father's nemesis, Saddam Hussein. He was felt by a majority of American's, according to a CNN poll of being more interest in deposing Saddam than in stopping al-Qaeda and barely succeeded in the first and was failing in the second.

What if? What if? What if?

Hell, he thought, I have enough options to really write a good story for the Patriot Fiction section. I've exhausted all of the scenarios I can think of for Intentional Communities, how about Unintentional Communities? Nope did that with the second story. How about I write what would happen to our neighborhood and us in the event that al-Qaeda or Hamas attacked Los Angeles with some of those suitcase nukes and people began streaming out of the San Fernando Valley intent on surviving at all costs? It wouldn't be like an earthquake where people stood around waiting to be rescued. The mushroom clouds would send people fleeing for their lives, leaving most of their possessions and valuables back in Los Angeles.

He wondered if anyone would be interest in a yarn like that? Well, he could always ask.

## The Survivalist – Chapter 1 – The Attack

Ron and Linda went out with Gary and Sharon to celebrate Gary's 61st birthday at Outback on Tuesday, March 23, 2004. They were visiting about all of the problems the US was facing including the White House's failure to condemn Israel for killing the Hamas leader.

"You know partner," Ron said, "There's really going to be trouble over this one. Didn't you say in your story that bin Laden had bought suitcase nukes from the Russians?"

"Sure did," Gary responded, "And a couple of nights later I heard the same thing on either Fox or CNN. Do you suppose some writer reads the Patriot Fiction on Frugal Squirrel's website?"

"It was probably just coincidence," Ron suggested, "It will probably take them a while to get ready for an attack on us. Keep your eye on the threat level. When it goes to orange, that means the government suspects something and if it goes to red, bend over and kiss your butt goodbye."

"I just wish I had been able to buy one of those used Garand's or an M1A rifle," Gary said, "That new computer won't be much protection if TSHTF."

"Hell, you've got 2 Mini-14's, that's more than I have," Ron laughed, "But I'll get the guys with my .41 magnum. Are we going to get an appetizer or can I order this large steak?"

"Do both," Sharon suggested.

They had the Onion Flower appetizer and Gary ordered his usual little Sirloin steak. Linda ordered fish and Sharon had the prime rib. Ron, of course, ordered a 16-ounce New York steak. After dinner, they went back to Gary and Sharon's for coffee and birthday cake. Gary absently flipped on the TV when they walked in and CNN was playing in the background.

The announcer interrupted the regular newscast and said that Homeland Security had raised the threat level to orange. Gary, who was half listening to the conversation at the kitchen table and half listening to the news went to the living room and turned up the volume. Apparently Secretary Ridge had thought the Israeli action would lead to another terrorist attack on the US and wanted to preclude the Hamas terrorists from getting into the US.

Talk about being a day late and a dollar short. Al-Qaeda had been bracing for an attack on the US for several weeks. They were waiting for the US to screw up so that they could try and shift the blame from themselves and right onto the American President. When Hamas began to blame the US for the assassination of al-Sistani, insisting that the US had to have approved the operation, al-Qaeda had the opportunity they were waiting for.

Great Britain and France, among others, were strongly condemning Israel and the White House limply condemned the action by the Israelis and denied any knowledge of the attack beforehand. They might have gotten away with that, but they then said that Israel had a right to defend itself.

It was a simple matter to attack the US because over the past year, al-Qaeda had smuggled 6 nukes into the US. They were stored in lead lined trunks in an apartment house complex in Pasadena where nearly  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the residents were Arabs.

They dispatched two men to San Francisco, two to San Diego, two to Las Vegas and two to Lancaster, California. The latter two were supposed to sneak into Edwards AFB and detonate their nuke near the NASA site. They kept two bombs in Los Angeles, one for the downtown area and one for the Port of Los Angeles at Long Beach. They intended to detonate the bombs at 7:45am on March 24th, the height of the rush hour.

Ron and Linda left after the cake and ice cream and Sharon went to her sewing room to work on a quilt. Gary wasn't much interested in the TV program and turned the TV to Fox News. Ron liked Fox a lot better than CNN, but Gary couldn't see that much difference, he generally despised the news media.

In his opinion, they weren't capable of reporting a story without putting a spin on it and then beginning to speculate. Usually, by the time it came to recap the news at the end of the hour, the speculation had become fact. He switched back to CNN in time to hear a gal with an English accent reporting that the Palestinians had, on the third day after the killing, attacked Israeli armed forces.

When his sleeping pill finally kicked in, Gary went to bed. He rose early the next morning around 6:30am, a bit earlier than usual. He checked his email, hoping for a letter from his son in Kosovo. No such luck. Usually his son was better about remembering his birthday than he was himself. Then again, since the trouble has broken out a few days back, Derek had been putting in 18-hour days. He had been pelted with rocks and had to dodge some Molotov Cocktails according to an email Gary had received from Derek's wife Mary. Derek hadn't said a word about that in his most recent email.

Gary did his usual morning routine, checking CNN and MSNBC on the net. Then he checked the Charles City Press, the Des Moines Register and the Los Angeles Times. He made a pot of coffee and was walking back to his office at 7:45am when he felt a small earthquake.

"Earthquake," he shouted to Sharon to wake her. Missy, his dog, started to whine. "Funny," he thought, "Missy never whines when we have an earthquake."

He decided to walk around the house and see if this little temblor had caused any damage. As he came around the west side of the house, he happened to look up toward the northeast. He could see a mushroom shaped cloud forming about where Edwards AFB

was.

"Crap, crap, crap!" he exclaimed. "Sharon, look over there at Edwards. Do you see that cloud?"

"Yes," She replied, "Oh my God, is that a mushroom cloud?"

"It looks like it to me, but I've only seen them in movies and on TV," Gary replied. He turned on the TV to channel 2, CBS. Static. He switched to channel 4, NBC. Static. He then turned to channel 7, ABC. He kept going and every Los Angeles TV channel was off the air. He switched to CNN. Adelphia fed many of the channels from satellite so CNN was playing.

*...apparently been detonated in the cities of Long Beach, Los Angeles, San Diego, San Francisco, Las Vegas and Edwards Air Force Base in southern California just moments ago. Repeating, nuclear weapons have apparently been detonated in the Cities of Long Beach, Los Angeles, San Diego, San Francisco, Las Vegas and Edwards Air Force Base in southern California, just moments ago.*" Judy Woodward was announcing. "CNN has no further word at this time. Please stay tuned while we bring you updates. Repeating, apparently..."

Gary switched from channel 41 to channel 42, Fox News. Fox was off the air! He switched back to CNN just as Wolf Blitzer came on the screen. *The Department of Homeland Security has announced that the threat level has been raised to Red. We are waiting for an announcement from President George Bush.*

Gary called Ron. Linda answered immediately. "Hello?"

"Linda it's Gary, is Ron up?" Gary asked.

"He in the shower Linda replied," I was just talking to my sister and her phone went dead."

"Go upstairs and look out Kevin's window to the northeast," Gary instructed.

"What am I looking for?" Linda asked.

"Did you feel the earthquake?" Gary asked.

"Uh, yes, but it wasn't very big." Linda replied.

"Well, that was no earthquake," Gary said, "Look out the window and tell me what you see."

"What am I looking for?" Linda asked.

“Just look, Linda and tell me what you see,” Gary insisted.

“My God, is that...” Linda started to ask.

“A mushroom cloud from a nuclear explosion,” Gary completed her sentence. “Turn on CNN; Fox News and all of the LA TV stations are off the air. CNN is saying that nuclear weapons have been detonated in San Diego, Long Beach, Los Angeles, Edwards, San Francisco and Las Vegas. And tell Ron to get the hell out of the shower.”

“Bye,” Linda announced and hung up.

Gary went into the bedroom and took out his LBE. He put the Browning in the holster and pulled his Mini-14 with the folding stock from the gun cabinet. He was running around in his bathrobe, so he dressed in jeans and a long sleeved shirt and put on his old pair of hiking boots. He hadn't had them on in 10 years, but they were soft and supple from the repeated oiling he gave them. He then put on his LBE, grabbed his rifle and headed back to the living room.

“What are you all dressed up for?” Sharon asked.

“Go get dressed and put on some good shoes,” Gary told her. “The crap just hit the fan.”

The picture changed to President Bush who was standing at the podium in the White House briefing room.

*My fellows Americans, Bush began, At 7:45am, PST, nuclear weapons were detonated in San Francisco, Las Vegas, Los Angeles, Long Beach, San Diego and at Edwards Air Force Base. Citizens of the affected cities are urged to evacuate to nearby communities due to the radioactive fallout. At this time, we have no idea who detonated the weapons, but it seems certain that this was either the work of al-Qaeda or another terrorist group.*

*I have placed our military on full alert and raised our alert status to DEFCON 2. I will be communicating with Governor Schwarzenegger and the Governors of Nevada, Oregon and Arizona shortly. All National Guard Units from the states of California, Nevada, Oregon and Arizona are being federalized as I speak. Please try to remain calm. Aid will begin reaching the affected cities within a matter of hours. I urge all citizens of communities surrounding the affected areas to lend aid to any evacuees that arrive in your area. I will report to you again this evening as soon as we have more information. Thank you. God Bless America.*

CNN cut back to Wolf Blitzer who was trying to explain what the President had just said.

“It's just like those damn reporters,” Gary thought, “Like I'm going to understand it better if you reword it Wolf!”

The phone rang. Sharon answered it and called out, “It's for you; it's Ron.”

“Hey partner, what a fricking mess,” Ron announced.

“Did you catch Dubya on the tube?” Gary asked.

“Yeah, he don’t know crap about what happened yet,” Ron complained.

“Well, I expect we’ll be seeing some cars out of LA in about ½ hour,” Gary said. “As soon as they come out of the mountains, they’ll see the mushroom cloud over Edwards and stop right here in Palmdale.”

“What are you going to do?” Ron asked.

“Already got my combat gear on Ron,” Gary said. “If they ask for help nice like, I’ll help them. But the first SOB that tries to force himself on me is going to be looking down the barrel of my assault rifle.”

“That’s a little harsh isn’t it?” Ron asked.

“Maybe. Like I said, if they ask for help, I’ll help,” Gary said. “But if they get demanding and start acting like I owe them something, screw them. I suggest that you’d better adopt the same attitude. It might be a couple of weeks before the government is able to help the refugees. They’ll probably be trying to rescue people at first and get them out of the areas where the bombs went off.”

“Do you think that they will find anyone to rescue?” Ron asked.

“Hell, I don’t know,” Gary replied, “Those suitcase nukes aren’t very big I don’t think; maybe only a kiloton or so. The bombs they dropped on Japan were 15 or 20 times that size. A lot depends on where they were detonated in LA. If they set it off downtown, a lot of the people in the Valley are going to be able to bug out. If they set it off in the Valley, nobody will be coming this way and there will be a lot fewer people to rescue.”

“We don’t have much food in the house,” Ron said, “If this starts to take a while is it ok if we come over? Or, are you going to shoot me too?”

“Why don’t you put your food and weapons in the cars and come over here?” Gary asked. “We have enough food for a year and I have a generator to keep everything cold when the electricity goes out.”

“Do you think the electricity will go out?” Ron asked.

“I thought it would be out be now,” Gary said. “Guess I don’t know where Palmdale gets its power from. Maybe from up north.”

“I’ll go by Pep Boys and buy as many gas cans as I can get,” Ron said. “I’ll have Linda



start loading the car and come over.”

“Ok, I be watching for her,” Gary said. “Later.”

“Ciao,” Ron replied.

Ron checked his wallet, jumped in his car and headed for Pep Boys. He grabbed a case of motor oil, 4 oil filters and 10 5-gallon gas cans. He stopped across the street at the Chevron station and filled the cans and his gas tank. The attendant told him it was cash only. He paid for the gas and headed for the gun store. It had opened early and one of the sales people was standing by the door with a shotgun. Ron was a regular customer and the woman let him in.

“What do you need Ron?” she asked.

“Just ammo,” he said.

“Good, because we’re not selling any guns,” she replied. “What do you want for ammo?”

Ron got 10 boxes of each caliber for his handguns and a case of 00 Buck. He couldn’t remember all the calibers Gary had so he bought 2 cases of 5.56×45mm, 10 boxes of .30-06, 10 boxes of .30-30, a case of .357 Magnum and her remaining 15 boxes of 00 Buck for Gary. Then he remembered that Gary had a 9mm pistol and a .38 revolver so he bought 10 boxes of cartridges for each of those calibers. That pretty much took care of his cash, so they loaded the ammo into his car and he headed to Gary’s house.

Linda and Sharon were unloading Linda’s car into Gary and Sharon’s garage. Ron unloaded the ammo, gas, oil and filters into the garage and hopped back into his car to return to his house. He loaded the remainder of the canned goods and his guns and ammo into the car and returned to Gary’s. By the time they finished unloading, he was hot and tired and it was only 10am.

Sharon had a fresh pot of coffee on. They got a cup of coffee and sat down to watch the news for a few minutes and rest. Gary had lost his Internet connection precisely at 7:45am. He had SBC Yahoo DSL and it came out of LA, so he couldn’t get any news from anywhere except CNN or the radio. He wanted to save the batteries in his radio for when the power went out, if it went out.

CNN didn’t know any more at 10am than they had known at 8am. They were on their fourth spin on the news and the 8am speculation was being reported almost as fact. It didn’t take Gary long to turn the TV off. Ron and he walked down to Chris and Patti’s house 2 doors down.

Patti, Matt and Daniel were at home. Chris worked at Paramount in Hollywood and was in the Universal City area when the bomb went off in downtown LA. He’d managed to get off the freeway and started to cut across the Valley headed toward home. He had

been shielded from the EMP and his old Beemer diesel putted right along. He was able to avoid all the major streets and by 10am was turning onto Sierra Highway from Soledad Canyon Road, a few miles from home. Gary tried to assure Patti that Chris was ok, but it wasn't until Chris pulled into the driveway at 10:20am that she believed it.

"Chris, how close were you to the blast?" Gary asked.

"If I hadn't been running 10 minutes late, I'd have been toast," Chris answered. "Can you believe a fucking a-bomb going off in LA?"

"Yes," Gary answered. "What was traffic like?"

"I came the back way as usual, so I missed most of it," Chris said. "Where I went under 14 at Shadow Pines exit, traffic was bumper to bumper. When I got on to Sierra Highway, there wasn't hardly any traffic. There must be an accident somewhere down 14."

"They will clear that and be flowing into Palmdale pretty quick," Ron said.

"Why would they stop at Palmdale?" Chris asked.

"Don't you look around when you drive?" Gary asked. "They exploded a nuke at Edwards, too."

"So that means..." Chris started to say.

"That Palmdale will be swamped with refugees," Gary finished. "I sure wish you would pull your pickup and trailer across the front of the tract Chris," Gary asked. "That will keep people out of the tract and we can just let in the residents."

"What about the refugees?" Chris asked.

"Ron and I are going to stand guard and if they know someone here or ask real nice, we might let them in," Gary explained.

"We are?" Ron asked.

"We are," Gary said. "I figure that Johnny will show up to check on Darlene and then we'll have a deputy in the tract."

"They're divorced Gary," Patti reminded him.

"I know Patti," Gary said, "But he didn't divorce his kids. He'll be here if he's alive and can make it."

"So what's with all the gun bs?" Chris asked.

“You want a bunch of people breaking into your house and stealing your food Chris?” Gary asked.

“Well, no,” Chris responded.

“And, how do you propose to stop them? With a tire iron?” Gary asked. “Go down to the house and get my stainless 5.56×45mm after you park the pickup and trailer. It already has the magazine in it. Bring it up to the front gate and I’ll show you how to use it. You’d better take a .38 and my 12 gauge Remington shotgun with the long barrel, too. You and Matt bring them to the front of the tract and I’ll show you how to operate them. I know you can shoot, but I don’t know if you’re familiar with those particular guns.”

Gary and Ron returned to Gary’s house while Chris moved the pickup. Gary put the magazine into the stainless Mini-14 and laid it, the 870 and his Chief’s special on the bed, together with 00 Buck and a box of .38 special cartridges. He folded the stock on his Mini-14 and slung it over his back. He grabbed the 2 riot guns and 2 60 round bandoleers, each filled with 60 rounds of 00 Buck. He gave Ron a shotgun and a bandoleer and slung the other bandoleer over his shoulder. They walked to the front of the tract, meeting Chris on the way.

“Everything is laid out on my bed Chris,” Gary said, “See you in a few minutes.”

## The Survivalist – Chapter 2 – The Refugees

Chris and Matt came to the front of the tract. It was obvious that they were both uncomfortable with the firearms, but Gary patiently showed Chris and Matt how to operate the Mini-14 and the 870.

“I have a magazine extension for the 870 somewhere in the garage,” Gary said. “I’ll dig it out later and we’ll extend the capacity of the shotgun. The Mini-14 mag holds 30 rounds, but don’t put over 27 in it. Even though that’s a PMI mag, you don’t want to overstress the spring.”

“Huh?” Chris responded.

“Never mind Chris,” Gary said removing a magazine pouch from his web belt. “Here are 3 more magazines for the Mini-14.”

Just then, Johnny pulled up in his squad car. “Are those guns loaded?” he asked.

“Wouldn’t be much good if they weren’t,” Gary replied.

“It’s against the law to have a loaded gun within the city limits unless you have a Concealed Carry Permit,” Johnny said, “And I doubt that you do.”

“No I don’t,” Gary admitted, “Are you here to check on your kids or are you planning to stay?”

“I can only stay a few minutes,” Johnny said.

“And who is going to protect your kids when you’re gone?” Gary asked.

“Just make sure you only use those to resist deadly force,” Johnny backed down.

“Got a spare throw down Johnny?” Gary asked.

“Jeez,” Johnny replied, “Are you going to move the truck so I can pull in?”

“It’s only 100’ to your house, why don’t you walk?” Gary suggested, “We’ll watch your car.”

Johnny got out of his car and walked to his house to check on his kids. He returned a few minutes later. “It’s bad out there and getting worse,” he said. “They cleared the accident on 14 and everyone coming over the hill sees the cloud over Edwards and is pulling into Palmdale.”

“I figured as much,” Gary said. “Don’t worry about your kids, they’ll be safe enough. But let me tell you something; I intend to stop, by any means necessary, anyone who tries

to force their way into this housing tract. We'll let decent people in as long as we have room. After that, no one gets in."

"I'll try to check on you periodically, or have another deputy do it," Johnny said, "But no promises. Like I said, it's getting bad out there."

"If you can't get a meal, come back here," Gary offered. "We have enough food to last for a while."

"They're pulling down the power grid shortly," Johnny said, "Do you have any way to keep your refrigerators going?"

"I have a generator and Chris has a generator," Gary said, "Well try to share the power, but we aren't long on gasoline."

"I'll bring some gas when I come back later," Johnny said. "Chris, will you make sure that Darlene and the kids have power?"

"Sure will," Chris said, "I'll park here on Northstar and feed the 23 homes on the north side of the tract. Gary can feed the 23 homes on the south side."

"I've got to go," Johnny said, "I'll be back with the gas as soon as I can."

"Cripes," Ron said, "I thought he was going to arrest the whole bunch of us."

"I'm sure that in normal times he would have," Gary said, "These aren't normal times and they won't be for a long time to come."

"You two guys are really serious about keeping people out with those guns, aren't you?" Matt asked.

"Matt, there are only 39 homes in this tract," Gary said, "Even if every family takes in only one family of strangers in addition to their relatives, we can only house so many people. And, I doubt that most families have a lot of food, so things are going to get tense real quick."

Matt shut up. It never did any good to argue with Gary anyway. He was, well, so conservative. He didn't know Gary's friend Ron, but he'd bet that the guy was just as conservative as Gary. His father, by contrast, worked in the film industry and tended to be fairly liberal.

In Matt's case, the fruit didn't fall far from the tree. He doubted that he could shoot anyone; unless, maybe, it came to protecting his family. He was convinced that it would never happen. What Matt didn't realize was that his father had a streak of pragmatism and wouldn't hesitate to protect his family.

The residents of the Moon Shadows tract began returning to their homes. They were shocked to find a pickup and trailer pulled across the entrance to the housing tract. Matt had stayed with Ron and Gary, both to move the truck and to help identify people who lived in the tract. Despite living there for 17 years, Gary didn't know most of his neighbors and Ron knew none of them. At least, Ron and Gary didn't point the guns at people who pulled up. They kept the muzzles of the shotguns pointed towards the ground in some sort of a ready position.

A carload of Hispanic teenagers pulled up to the tract. Gary looked at Matt and Matt shook his head 'No'. Gary walked over to the vehicle and Ron remained back.

"Can I help you folks?" Gary asked.

"Hey, let us in Esse," the driver said.

"No habla," Gary said, raising the shotgun barrel slightly.

"I said let us in man," the teenager insisted.

"Do you live here?" Gary asked.

"Naw, not until now," the punk smarted back.

The barrel of the shotgun rose about a foot and the driver was looking into a huge barrel.

"The way I see it," Gary said evenly, "Is that you can drive away right now or you can die right here right now."

The kid cussed in Spanish.

"Boy, I don't know what you just said," Gary responded, "10, 9, 8, 7..."

The tires squealed as the car backed up, turned and roared off.

"What he said was..." Ron began.

"I know what he said Ron," Gary interrupted him, "The girl across the street taught me some Spanish cuss words."

"I'd have shot the SOB," Ron said, "If he'd said that to me."

"Stick and stones, Ron," Gary replied, "Besides, I only have one throw down."

A while later a car containing a family pulled up to the barrier. Matt again shook his head 'No'.

Gary walked up to the vehicle. "Can I help you folks?" Gary asked.

"My name is Bob Robertson and this is my family," the man began. "We live down in Panorama City. We managed to get out right after the bomb went off. Is there any chance that you could put us up for a few days until the feds get here? We have a little food."

"Tell me Bob," Gary asked, "Do you have any weapons with you?"

"Yes, I have my rifle and a shotgun in the trunk. Why?" Bob replied.

"I just wanted to see if you would tell me the truth Bob," Gary replied, "We'll have to search the car. Do you mind?"

"Not at all," Bob smiled, getting out to unlock the trunk, "Does that mean you're letting us in?"

Gary looked in the trunk. There were two gun cases and two cardboard boxes of canned goods. The guy had been polite and truthful.

"Sure," Gary said, "You're welcome to put up here for a few days. Do you mind if we hold your guns until you leave?"

"Not at all," Bob said.

Gary closed the trunk lid without removing the guns. He could be wrong, of course, but the family seemed like a good risk. Gary looked at Ron who nodded his head yes.

"Pull to the end of the street and turn left Bob." Gary said, "My house is 4560. My wife's name is Sharon. Tell her I sent you."

It went like that for most of the day. People who claimed to have relatives in the tract were detained while Matt went after the relatives. If they were, in fact, relatives, they were let in. If they were lying, they soon became acquainted with the business ends of the shotguns.

Punks and people who tried to push their way in were sent packing immediately. Some of the resident's had firearms although many did not. Those who did patrolled the perimeter of the tract. Johnny and Darlene's daughter joined Matt because she knew everyone who lived in the tract and most of their relatives. One wouldn't necessarily call Darlene a busybody, but if the shoe fit...

Later in the day, some of the residents who were running the patrols stopped by the front of the tract to visit with Ron and Gary. They were able to work out a schedule that

put the younger men in charge of the night shift and left the older men to handle the day shift.

Meanwhile, Sharon, Patti and Darlene visited with every family in the tract to determine how they stood for food supplies. Most every family was good for a couple of weeks except for bread and milk. Of course, they would have to do without salads and fresh vegetables, but it wouldn't kill them. Sharon and Patti could bake bread as long as the natural gas wasn't shut off and they could get electricity to the stoves. After that, it would become a challenge to bake bread in a Coleman oven sitting on a camp stove. Gary and Sharon had six large boxes of instant milk, so that need would be met for a while, too.

Johnny was back the next morning with another 50-gallons of gas. He also had 4 5-gallon cylinders of propane. They had located a lot of half full bottles of propane in the tract, everyone seem to have a gas grill. A strong suggestion was made to everyone to not use his or her grills unless the natural gas was turned off.

There were 2 grocery stores and a Wal-Mart within a mile of the tract. Two miles further away, there was another grocery store and a Food for Less. The afternoon of the second day, the 26th, Ron, Gary, Chris, Matt and Dick got in Dick's pickup and drove to the stores. Two LA County Deputies were posted at each of the grocery stores.

Each person was allowed to purchase fixed quantities of the essentials: 1-gallon of milk, 5-pounds of flour, 5-pounds of sugar, 6 packages of dry yeast, 1 case of bottled water, 3 pounds of coffee or one box of tea, etc. The five of them each purchased their allotted amount from the Stater Brothers store. They returned home, dropped off the purchases and headed for the Albertson's to repeat the process. Meanwhile Darlene passed the word to the other resident's and they began to do the same thing.

Maybe it wasn't completely ethical to go to every store, but the Moon Shadows residents didn't care. Better they should load up now while food was relatively plentiful because most of the grocery wholesalers were located in the Los Angeles area. Before they were done, they had been to 2 Stater Brothers stores, 2 Albertson's stores, a Von's store and the Food for Less. Each person had bought enough food to last them for a month or more.

They decided to try the Costco store the next day, if they could score on some of those industrial sized boxes of food, they'd be set for a lot longer than a month. Everyone in the tract who was a member of Costco loaded up into Dick's, Chris's or Darlene's pickup. Costco was only allowing members in and was limiting purchases to \$200 per family. They bought the cheaper food like flour, sugar, powdered milk, pinto beans, rice and jars of yeast. The diet might get boring, but they would eat. Just to make sure that everyone got sufficient nutrition, they loaded up on vitamins.

The power was cut during the early afternoon of the 27th. They had 2 generators, 125 gallons of gasoline, Gary's 20 gallons of kerosene, plus the 4 5-gallon containers of propane (4½ gallon, actually, desert fill) Johnny had brought and 2 that Gary had.



There were also 17 5-gallon bottles of propane that ranged from nearly full to nearly empty. They still had natural gas so the stoves would work if they had electricity. If they used the generators for the refrigerators and freezers, they could keep everything cold. But that didn't leave them with power for the stoves.

They needed more generators and more gasoline quickly or they would be reduced to cooking on the gas grills and camp stoves. Dick worked for The Gas Company, formerly Southern California Gas Company, as an installer. He took a chance that some of the portable generators would still be at the shop. They occasionally needed power at installation sites and the shop had 8 7,500-watt portable generators. He hadn't said anything about the generators because he figured his co-workers had already grabbed them right after the bombings.

When Chris and Gary began going door-to-door looking for generators in the tract, he mentioned the generators. So far, he hadn't been called upon to go to LA and start any repairs on the gas lines. He told Chris that there was an outside chance that there might still be some generators at his shop. He got his Gas Company ID and the two of them set off for the shop. The population of Palmdale must have swelled to triple the normal 120,000. There were people everywhere and Sheriff's roadblocks on some of the main streets. Dick's gas company ID got them through the roadblocks and to the shop. When Dick unlocked the door to the shop, his heart sank.

The four generators normally kept in the shop were gone. The other four were kept in the garage and when they unlocked the garage they were still sitting where they always sat. Chris and he loaded the 4 generators and 5 55-gallon drums of gasoline onto his pickup. They rechecked the shop looking for anything they might use and found 2 empty 5-gallon gas cans.

The Gas Company had its own fuel depot and Dick scrounged around for more empty 55 gallon drums. He found 3, so they jury rigged one of the generators to provide electricity for the gas pump and filled his pickup, the 3 empty 55-gallon drums and the 2 empty 5-gallon gas cans. If they could come up with more empty drums or gas cans, they would have a large supply of fuel for the generators.

They drove back to Moon Shadows and unloaded the generators and heavy drums of gasoline. Gary's next-door neighbor Dan helped with the unloading. Chris mentioned that he sure wished he knew where they could get more cans or drums because there was plenty of gasoline at The Gas Company.

Dan said that there had been eight or nine empty drums behind the garage where he worked. They purchased oil in bulk and he thought the drums were still there. What the hell, they had nothing to lose and the garage was only a mile away. They put a generator back on the pickup and headed for the garage. It turned out that there were 9 empty drums.

They loaded them on the pickup, returned to The Gas Company. They reconnected the generator, flushed the oil drums and filled them with gasoline. Not a bad days work because they ended up with 17 55-gallon drums of gasoline, 2 5-gallon cans of gasoline and 4 7,500 watt generators.

They had been down to 20 gallons of gasoline; they now had 945 additional gallons. The only thing they lacked was enough oil to service the generators, but some of the residents changed their own oil and they came up with enough in the tract to keep the generators serviced for a long time. And then, there was the oil Ron bought. Dick had left a note on his boss's desk telling him where the generators were and the fact that he'd taken 945 gallons of gasoline. So far, they'd managed to supply the housing tract with food and electricity and hadn't had to steal.

Not too many relatives made it out of LA to the housing tract. Moon Shadows residents were able to take in 39 families before each home was running double occupancy. They drew the line at that point and from then on, only intended to let in more relatives. They'd had to threaten a few people to get them to leave, but so far, no shots had been fired.

According to CNN, the National Guards from Washington, Idaho, Montana, Utah, Colorado and New Mexico had been federalized and sent to California to aid with disaster cleanup. FEMA had been sent in and they had established several camps in the Antelope Valley, one in Gorman and two in the San Bernardino area for the LA and Long Beach residents. Another three camps had been set up in the San Diego area, and four in the San Francisco area. There were four camps on I-15 at the California-Nevada border for the Las Vegas residents and tourists. The military had evacuated Edwards AFB and shut it down entirely.

Unfortunately the world news wasn't nearly as rosy as the news coming out of California. Bush was making accusations, accusing al-Qaeda, Hamas, the Syrians, and the Iranians in complicity with the terrorists who did the bombing.

The US remained on DEFCON 2 and the UN was beginning to make a lot of noise about the US's continued high state of military readiness. Surprisingly, Russia, Great Britain, France and Germany all supported the position of the US. In Iraq, a violent uprising occurred, forcing Dubya to order the troops withdrawn to Kuwait and from there back to the US.

All of the coalition partners also pulled their troops from Iraq. The UN changed its condemnation of the US from complaining about the US occupation to complaining about the US withdrawal. Senator Kerry alternated from condemning Bush for starting the war in Iraq to condemning Bush for withdrawing the troops.

The lasted poll showed that were the election held immediately, Ralph Nader stood the greatest chance of winning the Presidency. The 39 families that had been given temporary shelter at Moon Shadows left for the FEMA relocation camps by the 7th of April,

leaving only the regular residents and their relatives at Moon Shadows.

Although continuing progress was being made to clean up California, the crisis was hardly over. In fact, it had only begun. Gary and Sharon's daughters and their families moved in with Gary and Sharon and Ron and Linda moved in with Chris and Patti. Two companies of Utah National Guard had finally relieved the Sheriff's deputies patrolling Palmdale, giving the deputies a much-needed break. Nobody had been called back to work in LA.

They cooked out on Gary and Sharon's patio the evening of April 8th. They finished off the ground meat in the freezer because the freezer simply took too much electricity. The attendees included Gary and Sharon, Lorrie and David plus 5 children, Amy and Udell plus 2 children, Chris and Patti plus two children and Ron and Linda. After dinner Ron and Gary went into the living room to listen to CNN. Wolf told them that the US was still on threat level Red and DEFCON 2. Dubya would address the nation at 8pm PDT, 11pm Washington time.

"I can't stand that SOB," Gary said, turning down the volume. "It's been 2 weeks of the same BS every night. The world is falling apart and Wolf wants to talk about the election in November. Who gives a crap!"

"You're in good voice tonight," Ron laughed.

"Here we go," Gary said turning up the volume, "Our fearless leader is going to tell us some more lies."

*My fellow Americans, Dubya (that's pronounced 'W' people) began. The FBI has arrested several individuals in connection with the bombings in California and Nevada. Although the individuals refuse to speak, they have tentatively been identified as members of al-Qaeda. Effective immediately, Secretary Ridge is reducing the threat condition to Orange and I have reduced our defense posture several levels (to DEFCON 4, but he didn't say so). I am pleased to report that electrical service should be restored in the affected areas of California and Nevada within the next 48 hours.*

*The temporary food shortages that have existed in California are being overcome as the grocery chains are now shipping in food from other warehouses, he continued. I wish to commend the citizens of California and Nevada who pulled together and helped each other make it through this crisis. Unfortunately the attacks dealt a serious blow to the infrastructure of southern California and the Bay area. The FEMA camps will remain open for several months.*

*The situation in the Middle East, he went on, continues to deteriorate. The armies of several countries have attacked Israel. I have ordered 2 additional Carrier task groups into the area. I have also ordered one additional Carrier task group into the Afghanistan theatre of operations. The civil strife in Kosovo has increased and NATO has ordered an additional 20,000 troops into the area.*

The speech droned on, but Ron and Gary began to lose interest. When the speech ended, Wolf Blitzer and others began to explain to the audience what the President had said and what they thought it meant. Gary turned the TV off.

“I don’t like the sounds of that,” Gary said, “Derek is going to end up getting killed yet. I don’t know why the hell we don’t just pull our people out of Kosovo and Afghanistan like we did in Iraq.”

“They aren’t out of Iraq by any means,” Ron observed. “It will be months before we can get all of our troops and equipment home. I just hope that the President doesn’t decide to shift our troops to support the Israelis.”

“You don’t think he would do that do you?” Gary asked.

“He might,” Ron suggested, “Have you heard him seriously condemn Israel for any of their actions?”

“I guess you’re right,” Gary conceded.

“Another thing,” Ron raised his voice, “Keeping those FEMA camps open for several months doesn’t sit well with me. There must be several hundred thousand people crammed into those camps. What’s going to happen when the weather turns hot in a month or so?”

The electricity came back on the next morning and everyone breathed a sigh of relief. Strangely, Dick still hadn’t heard from his employer about beginning repairs in Los Angeles. They removed the barrier from across the front of the housing tract, but left the pickup and trailer parked ready to redeploy if needed. Ron and Linda moved back to their home.

### **The Survivalist – Chapter 3 – Muslim Fury**

Muslims the world over were infuriated with the killing of al-Sistani. They struck out against non-Muslims without regard to any complicity the non-Muslims may have played in the death.

Although England and France were quick to condemn the Israelis, massive explosions shook London on April 9th and Paris on April 10th. Bush's failure to strongly condemn Israel only lent support to the assertions of many that the US was somehow involved.

The Iraqi people rose as a group and struck at the withdrawing American and coalition forces. The death toll on both sides quickly mounted as the Shi'ites, under the direction of a prominent cleric on the ruling council, vowed to end the occupation at all costs.

With the restoration of some order in Palmdale, Ron and Gary went on a shopping spree. Gary used his credit card to buy 2 M1A's and 3,200 rounds of 7.62x51mm Australian surplus ammo. For a substantial consideration, the dealer was willing to look the other way on the 10-day waiting period.

Ron knew a man who had bought 200 20-round M-14 USGI surplus magazines from Ammoman when they were on sale for \$35 each. Using a friend in Quartzsite, Arizona as a cutout, the Lancaster man had all the magazines you wanted for \$45 each. Gary bought 20 of the magazines.

They started hunting around for generators; Ron didn't have one and Gary's 7kw unit just wasn't big enough. A dealer in Lancaster had 2 12kw units but wanted 10% over retail for them. Thank God the guy took American Express. They also picked up manual transfer switches for the houses.

Their final outing on the 12th of April was to Costco. Costco was finally full restocked and didn't have any purchase limits. They bought a carload of food each and then went to Sam's Club and picked up stuff that Costco didn't carry. They gave up when they had their credit cards maxed out.

Since Ron's Amex didn't have a limit, they went back to the gun shop and bought more of the Aussie surplus 7.62x51mm. Dick installed the transfer switches for them and they were good to go on power. The propane dealer down on Sierra highway sold empty 10 and 25-gallon propane tanks. They used the last of their cash to buy his entire stock of bottles and have them filled.

"Well Gar-bear," Ron said, "We are broke until the first of the month, but if anything else happens we're covered."

"If we can make it until then," Gary said, "I'll refill my prescriptions and I'll have a 5 month supply of insulin."

"I don't buy my drugs," Ron said, "My cardiologist keeps me in samples. I couldn't afford the drugs if I had to buy them."

"How big a supply do you have?" Gary asked.

"Maybe six months," Ron replied. "Not to change the subject, but do you think things are going to settle down? Or is the US in for more trouble?"

"My money is on more trouble, Ron," Gary replied. "Those Israelis have pushed everyone around for years and gotten away with it. They really yank my chain."

"Is there anybody who doesn't really yank your chain partner?" Ron laughed, "You hate reporters, lawyers, politicians, the Entertainment Industry, Arabs, Jews, and a lot of other people."

"I don't have anything against Jews, per se," Gary replied, "But Tony ripping me off like that gave me a bad taste in my mouth for the stereotypical Jew. And, that has nothing to do about the way I feel about Israel. The Israelis are looking for trouble and they think that their big brother, the US of A will back them up whatever they do."

"We have so far," Ron smirked.

"Do you agree with that?" Gary snapped.

"Hell no," Ron retorted, "But it doesn't matter what I think. Linda and I had better get home," Ron said. "I'll see you late tomorrow morning."

"Ok," Gary replied, "Keep your eye on the news."

Before he went to bed, Gary took stock of their supplies. They probably had enough food to last the two of them 2 years, but with the kids staying over, 6 months was probably more realistic. Four of the gasoline barrels were empty; he made a note to talk to Dick about that the next day.

The 12kw generator would supply all of his and Sharon's electrical needs as long as they had fuel. They had stopped using the bottled water and had a full 150 gallons on hand. There was also 50 gallons of water in the hot water heater. He finally had his battle rifles and if TSHTF Big-time, he wouldn't even have to pay for them because the credit card company wouldn't be able to bill him.

Nothing of particular note happened over the next 15 days. They did manage to get the 4 55-gallon drums of gasoline refilled and located 7 more empty drums. Dick filled them from The Gas Company's fuel depot, too. Their gasoline supply was up to 1,455 gallons. They picked up some Pri-G from Pep Boys and added it to the fuel. Who knew when they would need it again? Everyone took their propane bottles to the dealer and had them refilled. He had gotten in a replacement load of 10-gallon bottles and 5-gallon

bottles and everyone bought what they could afford.

Gary's Social Security check hit the bank on the 24th. He went to the bank on the 25th and pulled out all but \$5 from his checking account. On the 1st, his and Sharon's retirement checks hit and he withdrew the full amount of those deposits. On the 4th of May, his trust fund income hit his Iowa account and he wrote a check for all but \$15 of his new Iowa balance and deposited it in his Wells Fargo account. The next day, he emptied his bank account one last time. Ron and Linda got his Social Security and her rental income on the first and they, too, converted everything to cash.

Gary and Ron were watching Aaron Brown report the news on CNN on the evening of May 5th. Gary thought that this Brown guy was ok, for a reporter. According to him, the situation in the Middle East was heating up rapidly. Syrian tanks had rolled through the Golan Heights and were entering northern Israel.

The American troop withdrawal from Iraq had speeded up and most of the troops were on ships bound for the Suez Canal. Apparently the president had thought better of entering the fray between Israel and the Syrians and all American forces were being withdrawn from all of the Middle Eastern countries. Events in Kosovo had settled down, but the extra troops that NATO had supplied to the region remained on station.

On the domestic front, the military had completed removing the bodies and any residual radioactive hazards from the area that had been hit by the nukes. Starting next Monday, the utility companies were expected to rebuild the utility lines and restore electrical service to all of the cities. Los Angeles, having been hit by two weapons, would require at least 6 months of restoring the utility infrastructure. A war of a different sort was looming between two rival Los Angeles gangs and LAPD had request additional troops to help end the escalating violence.

"I wonder what's going to happen if the Syrians get any further into Israel." Ron asked.

"I wouldn't put it past the Israelis to step up their bombing campaign on Damascus and other Arab capitals," Gary suggested. "And, if they get far enough behind the 8-ball, they have the nuclear option."

"Where is that place that Brown was talking about?" Ron asked.

"Megiddo?" Gary asked.

"Yeah, Megiddo," Ron replied.

"The most advertised battle engagement of all time is Armageddon." Gary explained. "In the Hebrew tongue Armageddon (16:16) was probably Har Megiddo, which means mount or city of Megiddo. Armageddon, presently only a rich archaeological excavation and tourist site, lies about 18 miles (29 kilometers) southeast of the coastal city of Haifa, in northern Israel.

“Because Megiddo occupied a strategic military position on the Plain of Esdraelon – which is the Greek derivation of the Hebrew, Yizre'el meaning God will sow, and is also identified with the Valley of Jezreel of Scripture – it was the scene of numerous historic, Biblical battles and many conflicts more recent. Geographically, Armageddon's Plain of Esdraelon cuts Israel in half, affording clear passage from the Mediterranean Sea to the Great Rift Valley of the Jordan River.

“Economically, Megiddo controlled a chokepoint on the ancient Via Maris – the ‘Way of the Sea’ (Isaiah 9:1) – making it of great importance along that international trade route connecting Egypt to Mesopotamia, i.e., Euphrates River.

“Located immediately above the Palestinian controlled West Bank area, the Plain of Esdraelon is a green, fertile valley about 15 miles long by 5 miles wide. Whoever maintained an army at Megiddo, controlled this essential international trade route, as did the Romans, when they came and fortified Legio, a mile farther south on the same ridge. Does that tell you what you want to know?”

“Can you translate all of that into one sentence I can understand?” Ron asked.

“Ok Ron,” Gary agreed, “According to the book of Revelations, the final battle will occur on the Plain of Armageddon. That is the symbolic battle between good and evil. However, that particular area has historically been the key to many battles. It’s not all that far from the Golan Heights, so Brown was probably suggesting that Israel and Syria will end up fighting it out there.”

“And if the Syrians win?” Ron asked.

“Israel will probably nuke them,” Gary said. “That’s when the crap will really hit the fan.”

“Why would they do that?” Ron asked, “Because they have nothing to lose?”

“Exactly,” Gary agreed. “I can’t believe that Syria will be able to defeat Israel, but if they do, watch out.”

The tired old man in Palmdale was almost right. Saddam had no chemical or biological weapons for the US to find. He had destroyed some and moved the rest to Syria. When it appeared that Syria would be unable to defeat the Israelis in an all out battle, they took leave to use some of those chemical and biological weapons on the Israeli Army assembled on the Plain of Armageddon.

The Israelis were prepared for any kind of weapon the Syrians could use, including the chemical and biological weapons. The big loser ended up being Syria. A flight of 4 F-15I (A downgraded version of the F-15E Strike Eagle) dropped 4 nukes on Damascus.

Al-Qaeda, which had heretofore not waged war against the Israelis, used their remain-



ing suitcase nukes on Israel. Unfortunately, a lot of Palestinians were victims of the bombs, too. The UN exploded into accusations and counter accusations. Colin Powell made an appearance before the General Assembly and insisted that the UN take immediate action to support the United States efforts to stamp out terrorism. Dubya kicked to DEFCON status back up to DEFCON 2 and Tom Ridge raised the Threat Level back to Red.

Defense readiness conditions (DEFCONs) describe progressive alert postures primarily for use between the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the commanders of unified commands. DEFCONs are graduated to match situations of varying military severity, and are numbered 5,4,3,2, and 1 as appropriate. DEFCONs are phased increases in combat readiness.

In general terms, these are descriptions of DEFCONs:

DEFCON 5 Normal peacetime readiness;  
DEFCON 4 Normal, increased intelligence and strengthened security measures;  
DEFCON 3 Increase in force readiness above normal readiness;  
DEFCON 2 Further Increase in force readiness, but less than maximum readiness; and  
DEFCON 1 Maximum force readiness.

Ron and Gary tried to dial each other at the same time. Gary got through because Ron had call waiting.

“Did you hear about Powell’s speech at the UN?” Ron asked.

“Yeah, and I also heard that Dubya raised us back up to DEFCON 2,” Gary replied.  
“That’s the third time in history we’ve been at level 2. The first was the Cuban Missile Crisis, the second after March 24th and now. I think that you and Linda ought to move back here.”

“Can’t partner,” Ron explained, “Clarence and Lucy just moved in with us.”

“The guy across the street, Dave moved in temporarily with his ex-wife and daughters,” Gary said, “He told Chris and me to use his house if necessary. Why don’t the four of you move in there?”

“Six of us,” Ron corrected, “You forgot John and Kevin.”

“Yeah okay, six of you,” Gary corrected himself, “It’s a 3 bedroom house so only John and Kevin would have to double up.”

“We’ll talk it over and I’ll get back to you. OK?” Ron replied.

“No problem Ron.” Gary replied, “But make it quick, if you can.”

Gary checked and rechecked his supplies. He was as ready as he was ever going to be. He slipped into his LBE and got out one of his new M1A's. "Sucker was a lot heavier than his Mini-14, this would take some getting used to," he thought. Gary had picked up an extra belt, holster and suspenders when he got the M1A's. The 3 magazine pouches each held 3 of the larger 20 round M-14 mags. If he had had a fanny pack, Gary would have been too loaded down to walk. He walked down to Chris and Patti's house.

"Got those radios charged up?" he asked.

"Why, what's going on now?" Chris asked.

"I could be wrong, Chris, but I think that we're in for trouble," Gary explained, "Dubya just pushed us back up to DEFCON 2 and Ridge put us back on Red."

"They caught those terrorists didn't they?" Chris asked.

"The bunch that supposedly did the a-bombs, yeah," Gary responded. "Anyway, are the radios charged?"

"Yes, been on the charging stand since the last time," Chris replied. "I see you're loaded for bear again. Is that a new rifle?"

"It's a M1A Chris," Gary replied, "Sort of the big brother to the Mini-14. You guys all set for food and supplies?"

"I can't believe that Patti let you and Sharon talk her into buying so much food," Chris complained, "You can't even walk around the house without tripping over a box of something."

"Come down and pick up a shotgun and the Mini-14," Gary said, "Take 3 extra mags for the rifle and a bandoleer for the shotgun."

"Which shotgun, the hunting gun or a riot gun?" Chris asked.

"Better take the riot gun, Chris," Gary suggested, "It does a lot better job with 00 Buck. Since you can see the entrance to the tract from your garage, I like to set up a command post here."

"I suppose you want me to move the race car out?" Chris asked somewhat resentfully.

"If you wouldn't mind, please," Gary responded. "I bought a 4 channel, 25-watt business channel radio and two of the channels are set to my/your handi talkies. We'll put that radio here. It will only take an hour or so to set up the antenna for it."

"You know the only reason I'm going along with this is because you got lucky the first time, don't you?" Chris half smiled.

“Was it luck or simple preparedness Chris?” Gary retorted, grinning. “Oh, by the way, I invited Ron and Linda to move into Dave’s house. He hasn’t let me know yet, but I expect to hear from him at any time.”

“You won’t have to wait long,” Chris said, “There are their cars now. Who’s the black guy?”

“That’s Clarence and his wife’s name is Lucy,” Gary replied. “They’re friends of Ron and me from the club.”

“Will they be staying with Ron and Linda?” Chris asked.

“Yes,” Gary answered and walked off to greet Ron and Clarence.

“Gary! Good to see you!” Clarence said, “How have you been doing through all of the excitement?”

“Hi Lucy. Just fine Clarence,” Gary replied, “Good to see you. What have you been up to lately?”

“Just getting by Gary,” Clarence sighed, “Just getting by.”

“Have you been following the news closely?” Gary asked.

“Yeah! What do you think of all that crap going on over in the Middle East?” Clarence responded eagerly.

“Something big is going to happen real soon,” Gary replied quietly.

It already had happened, it was just that no one knew about it. An employee at Disney World, perhaps of Arabic descent, perhaps Hispanic, it depended upon who you asked, had rigged 4 aerosol containers, which looked like cans of spray paint, to release their contents at 2pm on May 1st, 2004. The automatic release mechanism opened the valves and a fine mist drifted on the breeze infecting thousands of tourists who had flocked to the re-opening of the park.

Disney maintains a very high level of security at all of its parks. Under certain conditions even the air space over the parks is closed. No one suspected the employee who had worked in the maintenance department since July of 2001. He claimed to be a Californian of Mexican descent and a background check came up clean. He was from California, that much was true.

However, he wasn’t a native Californian nor was he of Mexican descent even though he spoke nearly perfect Spanish. He had last resided at a certain apartment complex in Pasadena along with several other countrymen of his. Unfortunately, they were in FBI

custody at the moment.

People began filtering into hospitals around the country May 9th. At first, the symptoms were non-specific enough that many doctors missed the obvious diagnosis. However, within 24 hours, the CDC in Atlanta began to receive calls and doctors were dispatched around the country to confirm the frightening diagnosis. Within 6 more hours, the diagnosis was confirmed and the President notified. He scheduled an immediate address to the nation, giving the networks barely time to have reporters and cameras in place.

At 9 pm EDT on May 10, 2004, a worried George W. Bush faced the cameras and began his announcement.

*My fellow Americans, George started, the Centers for Disease control are reporting widespread outbreaks of the Ebola virus. They have backed tracked the outbreak to Orlando, Florida beginning on May 5th. It appears that there is a high probability that the virus was released into the atmosphere at Disney World. The Park has been closed and is currently being searched by a team from the CDC and military biological specialists. Anyone who was at Disney World on May 5th through May 9th is requested to immediately contact his or her family physician or the nearest hospital emergency room. The Surgeon General, Vice Admiral Richard H. Carmona, will now give you some specific information about the Ebola virus. Dr. Carmona...*

*Ladies and Gentlemen, Dr. Carmona began, Ebola hemorrhagic fever (Ebola HF) is a severe, often-fatal disease in humans and nonhuman primates (monkeys, gorillas, and chimpanzees) that has appeared sporadically since its initial recognition in 1976. The disease is caused by infection with Ebola virus, named after a river in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (formerly Zaire) in Africa, where it was first recognized. The virus is one of two members of a family of RNA viruses called the Filoviridae. There are four identified subtypes of Ebola virus. Three of the four have caused disease in humans: Ebola-Zaire, Ebola-Sudan, and Ebola-Ivory Coast. The fourth, Ebola-Reston, has caused disease in nonhuman primates, but not in humans.*

*The exact origin, locations, and natural habitat (known as the natural reservoir) of Ebola virus remain unknown. However, on the basis of available evidence and the nature of similar viruses, researchers believe that the virus is zoonotic (animal-borne) and is normally maintained in an animal host that is native to the African continent. A similar host is probably associated with Ebola-Reston, which was isolated from infected cynomolgous monkeys that were imported to the United States and Italy from the Philippines. The virus is not known to be native to other continents, such as North America.*

*Confirmed cases of Ebola HF have been reported in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Gabon, Sudan, the Ivory Coast, Uganda, and the Republic of the Congo. An individual with serologic evidence of infection but showing no apparent illness has been reported in Liberia, and a laboratory worker in England became ill as a result of an accidental needle-stick. No case of the disease in humans has ever been reported in the United States previously. Ebola-Reston virus caused severe illness and death in mon-*

*keys imported to research facilities in the United States and Italy from the Philippines; during these outbreaks, several research workers became infected with the virus, but did not become ill.*

*After the first case-patient in an outbreak setting is infected, the virus can be transmitted in several ways. People can be exposed to Ebola virus from direct contact with the blood and/or secretions of an infected person. Thus, the virus is often spread through families and friends because they come in close contact with such secretions when caring for infected persons. People can also be exposed to Ebola virus through contact with objects, such as needles, that have been contaminated with infected secretions.*

*Nosocomial transmission refers to the spread of a disease within a health-care setting, such as a clinic or hospital. It occurs frequently during Ebola HF outbreaks. It includes both types of transmission described above. In African health-care facilities, patients are often cared for without the use of a mask, gown, or gloves. Exposure to the virus has occurred when health care workers treated individuals with Ebola HF without wearing these types of protective clothing. In addition, when needles or syringes are used, they may not be of the disposable type, or may not have been sterilized, but only rinsed before reinsertion into multi-use vials of medicine. If needles or syringes become contaminated with virus and are then reused, numerous people can become infected.*

*The incubation period for Ebola HF ranges from 2 to 21 days. The onset of illness is abrupt and is characterized by fever, headache, joint and muscle aches, sore throat, and weakness, followed by diarrhea, vomiting, and stomach pain. A rash, red eyes, hiccups and internal and external bleeding may be seen in some patients.*

*Diagnosing Ebola HF in an individual who has been infected only a few days is difficult because early symptoms, such as red eyes and a skin rash, are nonspecific to the virus and are seen in other patients with diseases that occur much more frequently. However, if a person has the constellation of symptoms described above, and infection with Ebola virus is suspected, isolate the patient and notify local and state health departments and the CDC.*

*It was only through the most fortuitous circumstances, Dr. Carmona continued, that we were able to identify the disease at this early stage. Unfortunately, there is no standard treatment for Ebola HF. Patients receive supportive therapy. This consists of balancing the patient's fluids and electrolytes, maintaining their oxygen status and blood pressure, and treating them for any complicating infections. I now return you to President Bush.*

*For the reasons outlined by the Surgeon General, Bush continued, the CDC has requested an immediate quarantine of the entire county for a minimum of 21 days. I declared martial law immediately before this broadcast. A 24-hour curfew will be in effect as of 9pm EDT today and will continue through 9pm EDT on May 31, 2004. Anyone suspecting they have been exposed should contact their family physician or the nearest hospital emergency room.*

*Do not, I repeat, do not travel to your doctor or to the hospital. Medical professionals will be in immediate contact with you and arrange for any necessary transportation and treatment. Our only hope in halting the spread of this dreaded disease is immediate compliance by all Americans. All forms of public transportation are immediately embargoed and all aircraft are being instructed to return to their point of departure if possible. Aircraft unable to return to their point of departure are being instructed to land at the nearest airport. The flights will be quarantined until medical authorities examine all passengers and air crew members.*

*This event is more serious than even the bombings of our cities in California and Nevada, Bush concluded. For this reason, I have ordered the military forces to shoot, on sight, anyone violating the curfew. I cannot say it plainer than this. Stay home and stay safe. If you are not presently at home, notify the nearest law enforcement facility for instructions. Thank you and good night. God Bless America.*

## The Survivalist – Chapter 4 – Total Panic

“Chris, you’d better...” Gary yelled into the radio.

“I’m already on it Gary, we moving the truck and trailer back into place right now,” Chris interrupted Gary.

“I can’t believe that anyone would release Ebola into the wild like that,” Gary said to Ron. “There’s no known cure for the virus. Hell, whoever released it is in as much danger as we are. We’re going to have to disinfect all of our water with bleach or something. I don’t even know if that will work.”

“Why don’t we just put out the word to everyone in the tract to use bottled water until they’ve check our water supply?” Sharon suggested from the kitchen.

“I’ll talk to Chris and see how he’d suggest handling it,” Gary replied.

“Chris, meet me in your garage,” Gary radioed Chris.

“10-4,” Chris replied.

A few minutes later in Chris’s garage... “Sharon suggests that we only drink bottled water until our water supply is checked. What do you think?” Gary asked.

“Good idea,” Chris responded, “I’ll tell Matt to let everyone know.”

*Flashback to May 1, 2004 in a Palestinian Camp on the west bank...*

“The devices are in place?” Rantisi asked the man.

“They should activate in 4 minutes,” the man replied.

“Praise be to Allah,” Rantisi replied. “Come, I have one final mission for you to perform.”

Abdel Aziz Rantisi led the man to the other room. “An important Israeli escaped the bombs in Tel Aviv,” he told the man. “He is presently in Jerusalem. Will you glorify the name of Allah and deliver this bomb to him?”

“Of course,” the man replied.

“Here is his picture,” Rantisi said, “You will find him at this location at noon tomorrow. Place the bomb anywhere within 10’ of the man and press the trigger. You will have 30 seconds to clear the area.”

“Praise be to Allah,” the man said and left.

The following day, the man was at the restaurant at 11:55am. Precisely at noon, the man in the photo appeared. The man stepped close to his target and sat the briefcase on the ground. He pressed the button to activate the 30-second timer and the bomb immediately exploded. Rantisi was observing from a distance. "That takes care of any links between him and Hamas," he thought. "The world would never forgive us."

*Return to Chris's garage on May 10, 2004 at 6:30pm...*

"Ok Chris, have Matt tell them that I have extra drinking water if they run out," Gary replied.

Of course the water supply in Palmdale, California was in no danger. Gary was just terrified at the prospect of Ebola running loose anywhere in the US. He didn't know very much about the disease, but he'd read the book by Dr. William T. Close about the first outbreak in the Zaire several years before. The only US outbreak had been in Reston, VA and had only involved monkeys. If he had any say, no one would be going in or out of the tract. Jeez, why couldn't they have used something simple like smallpox or the plague? And, what was with this airborne stuff? Wasn't Ebola usually transmitted through contact rather than as an airborne virus? Maybe someone had engineered it to be airborne.

Gary checked his supplies to see how many air masks and respirators he had. There was one box of 20 3M 8233 N100 Particulate Respirators, they were expensive at \$130 a box. There were 8 30-count boxes (one case) of 3M 8000 N95 Masks which only ran \$118 a case. He bought the case of N95 masks when the SARS thing happened. He'd read an article on the net that suggested the N95 masks were insufficient and had purchased the recommended N100 respirators. "I don't suppose anyone else in the tract has any masks at all," he thought. "Oh well, guess I'll have to share the N95's."

It wouldn't be necessary to wear the masks all of the time, rather only when someone were in contact with a stranger. "Besides," Gary thought, "What was the chance of Ebola making it all the way from Orlando to Palmdale?" Generally, Gary was a pretty clear thinker. This time, he overlooked the obvious.

Sharon had worked for Disney and had made any number of trips to Orlando for Seminars and meetings. Coincidentally, a Disney employee who had worked in Burbank had been scheduled for a training class in Orlando so that she would be ready to implement a new system when the Burbank office reopened. The class was April 28, 29 and 30. She took one day of vacation and toured Disney World using her silver pass on May 1. She had returned home through the Ontario Airport on May 2nd. She became ill and was hospitalized at AV Hospital on May 9th. She had spent May 5th at the AV Mall in Palmdale, shopping for a new dress for a friend's wedding. Nope there wasn't much chance that Ebola had made its way to Palmdale.



Matt distributed the N95 masks to everyone in the tract. Gary held on to the N100 respirators. On May 11th, Ron and Gary were watching Aaron Brown's news program.

"Reports have reached CNN that a case of Ebola has been diagnosed as far away as Lancaster, California," Brown said.

"Crap," Gary said, "I was just thinking earlier that there wasn't much chance of Ebola making it to Palmdale. If it's in Lancaster, it's probably in Palmdale."

"I think that we need to create an exclusion zone of 100' around the tract," Ron offered.

"We can do that on the west, north and east Ron," Gary replied, "But the houses to the south are probably within 100' of our houses."

"Well, if everyone stays in his or her home like they're supposed to," Ron countered, "That shouldn't be a problem. We could put up some 'Keep Back' signs on the block wall between the two tracts, I suppose."

"Can Ebola read?" Gary laughed.

"Huh?" Ron responded.

"All I'm saying is that if this strain is airborne," Gary explained, "Putting up signs won't do any good. I guess we should put out the word to that everyone should wear their masks anytime they are outside of their home. Anyway, Bush was full of crap if he thinks that there will only need to be a 21-day period of quarantine. I think that it will need to be at least 6 weeks, maybe 9 or 12."

"Why?" Ron asked.

"Imagine someone getting exposed on the 21st day," Gary explained, "They might not show symptoms for another 21 days. That's 6 weeks right there."

"Won't the quarantine help with that?" Ron suggested.

"Sure for people who do what they're told to do," Gary allowed, "But what about the people that don't?"

"How long do you propose that we hole up?" Ron asked.

"Everyone is going to have to vote on that," Gary replied, "I'm going to push for a full quarter, 13 weeks."

"You're going to be really popular around here," Ron suggested.

"You mean like I already am?" Gary laughed. "We've never had a homeowners meeting,

the previous crisis was too brief. We should talk to Chris and Patti and see what they think about having a meeting.”

Gary and Sharon talked to Chris and Patti. Chris didn't care either way, but Patti thought it was a good idea. Patti called Darlene and she was all for it. She offered to set up a meeting of the homeowners if they wanted; after all she said, she knew everyone. Patti told her to go for it and Darlene called back 3 hours later to say that a meeting was scheduled for 7 pm tomorrow night in the Cruz's back yard.

At 7pm on May 12th, everyone who was living in the tract gathered in the Cruz's back yard. Darlene had set up the meeting, so she started it.

“Gary and Sharon talked to Chris and Patti last night about having homeowner's meetings,” Darlene began, “I understand that Gary and his friend Ron have some information about the Ebola and some opinions on what we should do about it. Gary, do you want to start off?”

“Did everyone get a face mask?” Gary asked. The nods seemed to confirm that they had.

“I only have a limited supply of those masks,” Gary explained. “Ron suggested that we create an exclusion zone of about 100' around the tract. I favor that, but the houses on the tract south of us are only about 100' feet from our homes. So, before I discuss the matter any further, does anyone have any suggestions?”

“Yeah, why do we need an exclusion zone?” a man asked.

“Apparently the disease was originally delivered in aerosol form,” Ron replied. “Gary and I have watched the news regularly and that seems to be the consensus. The CDC treats live Ebola virus at its highest level of containment, whatever that is. I don't know if the masks Gary had Matt pass out will do any good or not, but they're better than nothing. I only suggested a 100' exclusion zone to cut down on the likelihood of a diseased person transmitting the virus into the tract. For all I know, 1,000' wouldn't be enough.”

“I don't know either,” the man replied, “I just wondered. One hundred feet makes sense to me. Is there anything else we can do?”

“I have a small supply of N100 respirators,” Gary said. “There aren't enough to go around, but if we all try to stay in our homes as much as possible, there may be enough to outfit our guard force.”

“How come you have N100's and only gave us N95's?” someone asked.

“Because I bought them,” Gary said, “How many of you thought to buy any kind of masks at all? There was the SARS scare a year ago. Did any of you go out and buy any of the N95's that they were recommending at the time?”

You could have heard a pin drop!

“Didn’t think so,” Gary continued. “Be grateful that I bought the N95’s first. Had I known about the N100’s at the time, I wouldn’t have bought the N95’s at all and you would all be out of luck. Like I said, I’ll supply the N100’s to the people who MUST be outside. So, is everyone agreeable to the 100’ exclusion zone?”

The nodding heads seemed to confirm that there was a general agreement that Moon Shadows should maintain an exclusion zone.

“What are you going to do if someone violates the zone?” a woman asked.

“Tell them to stop. If they don’t, we’ll kill them on the spot,” Ron replied.

“You can’t do that,” the woman insisted.

“Ok lady,” Ron replied, “We’ll send them to your house, then.”

“You...” she shut up when she realized that she was making a fool out of herself.

“The question really is how long we’re going to maintain the exclusion zone,” Ron suggested.

“Didn’t Bush say the quarantine was only through May 31st?” another woman asked.

“I believe he said at least until May 31st,” Gary responded. “Personally, I believe that he will end up extending it several times beyond that date. I’m going to suggest that we maintain the exclusion zone for 90 days. We can always shorten that if Bush says it’s safe.”

That set the people to talking. Ron and Gary just sat and ignored them. If the people didn’t want to go along with it, it was fine with them; they’d just lock up the houses for 90 days and ignore everyone. After the conversation had gone on for about 15 minutes and showed no sign of abating, Darlene stood up.

“All right folks, we have to reach a decision on this,” she said. “Everyone in favor of 90 days raise your hands.” About  $\frac{1}{3}$  of the hands raised.

“Everyone one in favor of 45 days, raise your hands,” she continued. A little over half of the group raised their hands.

“Everyone in favor of less than 45 days, raise your hands,” she concluded. The remainder of the group who hadn’t raised their hands put up their hands.

“Gary, it would appear that the majority favors 45 days,” Darlene said.

“Fine,” Gary said rising. “Ready to go Ronald McDonald?” Ron rose too, as did the members of their families and Clarence and Lucy.

“Where are you going?” Darlene asked anxiety clear in her voice.

“Home,” Gary replied. “See you all in 90 days.”

“Hey, you can’t do that,” someone shouted.

“Can’t do what?” Gary asked, “Go to my home and lock my door? Try and stop me.”

“What about the N100 respirators and the drinking water?” the complainer asked.

“What about them?” Gary responded.

“What about those of us that don’t have much bottled water and what about giving the N100 masks to the guards?” the complainer continued.

“Ain’t my fault that you don’t have bottled water,” Gary smiled. “We’ll need the N100 masks ourselves if you are going to be letting people in before 90 days.”

“Hey, that’s not fair,” another person spoke up.

“Who ever told you that life was fair?” Gary asked, “You California people with all your liberal ideas really yank my chain at times. My first responsibility is to my family. I’ve taken the necessary precautions to protect my family. You should have too. What can I say?”

“Don’t let him put you off with his remark about you yanking his chain folks,” Ron quickly interjected. “Everything yanks his chain at one time or another. He’s right though. He told you what he thinks is reasonable. You don’t have to go along with him. And, he doesn’t have to go along with you. It’s a free country. Besides, I thought I heard him say that the period could be shortened if Bush said it were safe to do so.”

“I’d just like to know who the hell he thinks he is to be able to dictate to us,” a third person remarked.

“I’ll answer that,” Gary replied loudly. “I’m the crackpot survivalist who lives down the block. I’m the guy you’ve made fun of for 17 years. I’m the frigging idiot who figured all this crap was going to happen someday and who wanted to be prepared. I was right; it happened, big time. I was prepared. I shared my preparedness with you people. I offered to go further if you wanted to take some sensible precautions. You don’t. Fine, don’t. But, I’ll have no part of it.”

“Wait a minute,” a fourth person replied. “All you want is to put in the exclusion zone for

90 days subject to revision, right? Hey everyone, what he's asking for isn't totally unreasonable. I suggest that we rethink this. Is it better to be safe than sorry. That's all Gary is saying."

"Everyone in favor of maintaining the exclusion zone for 90 days, raise your hands," Darlene took a second vote. More than  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the hands went up.

Gary and Ron sat back down. You had to say one thing for Gary. He was getting pretty set in his attitudes, as he grew older. Maybe that's what came from watching a country slowly destroy itself over a lifetime. Or, maybe that's what happened to a person when they'd been taken advantage one too many times.

Whatever. It seemed pretty certain to the folks in the meeting that he was very conservative on issues of safety and it was his way or the highway. And those friends of his, Ron and Clarence didn't seem to be much different. They'd learned it at the same school that Gary had; the School of Hard Knocks. Even Chris and Patti agreed with Gary, most of the time.

After the meeting, Gary gave N100 respirators to Ron, Clarence and Chris. The other 16 were given to Dan who was in charge of the guard force. Gary and Sharon went to Ron and Linda's and Linda put on a pot of coffee. The six of them sat around the kitchen table visiting.

"Jeez, Gar-bear, you don't pull any punches, do you?" Ron smiled.

"Hey Ron, what the hell," Gary replied. "I don't know why God put me on this earth. Maybe I am a latter day Matthew; tax collector turned apostle. I really doubt that, however. I do know that most people, especially it seems those here in California, seem to expect the government to bail them out all of the time. Unless I remember incorrectly, God helps those that help themselves. I'll help, but not if it hurts my family."

"Makes sense to me Gary," Clarence responded. "You think these N100 filters are any better than the N95 masks?"

"I don't know that anything other than a full environmental suit will protect you against Ebola, Clarence," Gary grinned, "That wasn't my point."

"I know Gary, you made your point at the meeting," Clarence said. "I was just wondering if we shouldn't stay in the house as much as possible, that's all."

"I plan to," Gary replied. "I'm kind of getting to like that Aaron Brown on CNN."

Gary and Sharon went home and he put on the recast of Aaron Brown's earlier program. Brown was reporting that the quick action by the President had appeared to have some effect of the spread of the Ebola. The number of new cases being reported was beginning to level. The numbers were expected to continue to rise over the next few

weeks, but the CDC was suggesting that in time the number of cases would begin to fall off if the quarantine were maintained for a long enough period.

The CDC had identified the virus as a genetically engineered form of Ebola-Zaire. In other news, the virus had spread to Europe, Japan, China and the Middle East. By all accounts given by Disney employees, there had been visitors from all over the world in attendance on the day of the reopening. The population with the highest percentage of cases, per capita, was the Palestinians. Only the Europeans, Russians and Japanese had responded with the rapidity of the Americans. The disease was spreading quickly in China and the Middle East.

Gary had given his radio back to Chris and taken scanners for Ron and himself. He was sitting at his computer playing Free Cell to occupy his time when he heard a call from the front entrance to the Command Center.

“We have two carloads of people approaching from the west,” Matt announced.

Gary put on his web gear, put the M1A over his back and grabbed a riot gun and bandoleer. He put on his N100 mask and headed out the door. Ron had his Mossberg 500A and was wearing a western rig with a Ruger Blackhawk in the holster. They made their way to the front of the tract as fast as Gary could shuffle. When they arrived, the two cars were pulled up tight against the cable they had strung right next to the street. A group of well-armed gang members had piled out of the cars and were standing there arguing with Matt and Dan.

“And I told you that you can’t come any closer,” Dan said.

“We got you out numbered,” the apparent leader said. “Put down those guns if you want to live.”

The words were barely out of his mouth when Clarence and four other residents, all armed with shotguns, joined the residents at the entrance. All of the shotguns were loaded either with 12-pellet or 15-pellet 00 Buck. The gang bangers were facing a formidable force. The leader cajones must have been bigger than his brain. He raised his pistol to shoot. The 7 gang bangers were cut to ribbons by the 00 Buck, but not before they got off a couple of lucky shots.

Matt was hit in the right arm, a through and through. A round had singed Gary’s cheek and although not a big wound, it bled profusely. Now, by God, Gary was HOT. He walked over to the gang banger who had shot him. The punk was bleeding profusely and would probably die soon. Gary shot him first in the left knee, then in the right knee with his Browning. He raised his point of aim slightly and shot the punk in the right shoulder then in the left. The punk finally passed out and Gary walked off.

“Are you po’d or something?” Ron asked.

“Not anymore,” Gary replied.

“Dan, I’d like to suggest that you guys use some rope or something and drag those but-tholes over to the field across the road,” Gary said. “Whatever you do, don’t touch them and don’t get any of their blood on you. After that, maybe you should pour some gaso-line on the blood and burn it off. Make sure you don’t inhale any of the smoke.”

Dan got 3 men to help him and they used rope to drag the bodies where Gary had sug-gested. Matt returned home to get Patti to treat his wound. Gary went home, got his wound bandaged and took a spare bottle of 30-500mg Keflex to Patti for Matt. Patti complained that the medicine was expired. Gary looked at the date on the bottle and told Patti she was wrong, the medicine was good for 8 more years.

Patti mentioned that Matt had a tetanus shot recently and Gary offered his opinion that Matt should be ok if she cleaned the wound well enough. Matt received another helping of Hydrogen Peroxide. Gary also took Matt a handful of Vicodin. One every 4 hours he instructed Patti but no way let Matt have any more than 8 in 24 hours (500mg×8=4g, maximum daily dose of Tylenol). And the sooner he got off of them the better. Let him know if Matt had trouble sleeping, he had the perfect pill for that, too.

“That’s going to leave quite a scar, you know,” Ron told Gary.

“As old as I am, who cares?” Gary answered. “Besides, it might make the next SOB think twice before he pulls down on me.”

## The Survivalist – Chapter 5 – Poetic Justice

The Palestinians rejoiced as they learned the news of the outbreak of Ebola in the US. With Israel all but destroyed and the Great Satan dying in droves, it must be the will of Allah; they felt free for the first time in years. They traveled to Mecca to pay homage to Allah for delivering them. Within a few short days, however, they began to develop symptoms of Ebola themselves and had unintentionally succeeded in infecting Muslims from all over the world.

Abdel Aziz Rantisi knew immediately what was happening but there was nowhere he could travel to. The disease was spreading throughout the Middle East and into Africa, Pakistan, and Indonesia. It even made an appearance in the Balkans. The American troops in the Balkans (Kosovo) were mopped up at level 4 and had been since the outbreak in the US was discovered on May 10th. Bush advised NATO that the US had no alternative but to withdraw its troops back to the US. The C5A Galaxies and C-17 Globemaster IIIs began making around-the-clock flights returning the American soldiers home.

The troops were all transported to Ft. Stewart Georgia, and allowed to de-mopp for the first time in three weeks. If they hadn't had gear to change into after the maximum two weeks of effectiveness, or, had their return to the US been delayed, the troops would have surely contracted Ebola, so rapidly was it spreading throughout the Balkans.

That they had the change of gear was one of Bush's finer moments. Immediately after he had announced the countrywide quarantine in the US, he had ordered extra mopp gear provided to all overseas units and all units recalled for every country where the Ebola virus appeared. Hell, even Dubya did something right once in a while.

The people at Moon Shadows didn't have any mopp gear, but neither were they affected with any longing to reach out to their fellow Californians and provide them with shelter. They weren't particularly surprised, either, when Bush extended the quarantine from May 31st to June 30th. Gary had told them that it would happen and by golly it did.

Ron kept a radio turned to a Lancaster station that remained on the air 24/7. It was he who first learned that the water in the Antelope Valley had been tested and was found to be free of the virus. Citizens should be reassured, the radio had said, because extra chlorine was being added to the water, just in case. That was a fact; you could hardly drink the stuff without running it thru a Pur or Britta filter to get rid of the chlorine taste.

Gary was down to his last 10 gallons of water when Ron passed the news. He immediately began to refill the bottles using his reverse osmosis water purifier. When they first put in the filter, they continued to drink bottled water and used the filtered water for cooking. The refilling process would take several days because the filter only processed somewhere between 1 and 2 gallons per hour; Gary wasn't sure; he'd never timed it.

On the Aaron Brown's evening broadcast of May 26th, he'd announced that all of the



Americans had safely evacuated from the Balkans. That was a relief. Derek was safe. Damon was at Mary's and they were bundled up tight. Gary had purchased a case of N100 filters for Derek and Mary and they had enough to pass some out to Francis and Jerry and his family. Iowa was experiencing fewer Ebola cases than many states; apparently the farmers couldn't afford to go to Disney World (or, they were too cheap).

About 3 weeks after the first scare at the front entrance, another carload of people came driving slowly past the front entrance. Maybe it was the cars sitting out in the field across from Moon Shadows; or maybe it was the 15 resident's all armed with shotguns or assault rifles. Whatever the reason the car didn't even slow down. At the homeowner's meeting that night, Ron couldn't keep himself from walking up to the woman who had been so opposed to killing people who tried to force their way into the tract.

"That bunch didn't even slow down today, do you still think we shouldn't shoot people who try to force their way in?" he asked. The woman got very red in the face and walked off. Ron couldn't tell if she was angry or embarrassed, but he guessed it didn't matter, she was with the program now and wasn't complaining any more. Some of the folks had begun to refer to Gary, Ron and Clarence as 'the three old geezers'. (Oops, wrong story, same 3 guys, but wrong story-read "The Ark") The three of them thought it was funny and they laughed about it over their morning coffee at Ron's kitchen table.

"You know, we need to get some target practice in," Clarence said, "The problem is how can we do that if we can't leave the tract?"

"It's about 125 yards from Dick's front lawn to the east end of Moonraker," Gary said, "maybe we could shoot from west to east along the street."

"Gee, I don't know about that Gar," Ron objected, "All there is to stop the bullets is a concrete block walk. Bullets will go right through that, especially from our big rifles."

"I wonder if Chris has any metal plate?" Gary wondered aloud. "I think I'll walk down and ask him."

"Let's all go," Ron suggested.

They walked down to Chris and Patti's garage. Chris was sitting there talking to Dan and Dick and drinking tea.

"Chris, do you have any metal plate?" Gary asked.

"I have a little, what do you want it for?" Chris asked.

"We need to do some target practice and we need to build a bullet stop," Gary explained.

"I don't really have anything heavy enough for that Gary," Chris replied, "I have a couple

of pieces of ½” plate, but they aren’t very big.”

“How big is that?” Gary asked.

“They’re about 3’ by 4’,” Chris replied.

“Could you weld them, into a single plate 3’ by 4’ by 1” thick?” Gary asked.

“I suppose,” What would you do with them?” Chris asked.

“I was thinking if you could use some angle to build a frame to support them with the long side running up and down, and tilted forward at the top 45 degrees, we could hang a silhouette target in front of the plate,” Gary explained. “I could put the kid’s sandbox at the base to catch the bullets that deflect downward.”

“Gary, that won’t be enough sand,” Ron said. “I’ll go around the neighborhood and see if anyone else has a sandbox for their kids.”

“Yeah, and I’ll cut up a sheet of that plywood into some pieces 2’ high and 4’ long,” Clarence said. “I saw some short pieces of 2x4 in your pile of firewood so I can build a 4’ square frame 2’ high to fill with sand.”

“And I’ll build the center point of the plate about 3’ off the ground,” Chris offered. “If I weld a plate on the bottom of the frame and we set the frame inside of the box, the weight of the sand should hold the frame from tipping over.”

“Just to be sure Chris,” Clarence said, “We could bolt the plate to the bottom plate of the sand box. That would force the backstop to try and raise the whole box of sand.”

“If we fill the box of sand to the top,” Chris said, “that will be over 3 cubic yards of sand. I don’t know how much sand weighs, but I doubt that the energy of the bullets striking the plate would be enough to tip it over.”

“Well if it is, we can always add water to the sand,” Ron suggested.

Ron went to look for more sand and Chris and Matt manhandled the plates into the garage. Chris clamped the plates together and welded the seam the full length of all four sides. The resulting plate was so heavy that they had to use his engine hoist to move it.

Chris then took some 2”x2” angle iron and fashioned a frame. They held the huge plate in place, moved the frame into place and clamped the frame and plate together. Meanwhile Clarence had fashioned the large sand box. They lifted the backstop with the engine hoist and struggled to push it to the end of the block.

They went back and dragged the empty sand box down to the end of the street and pushed it up against the wall. They cranked the hoist to its upper limits and lowered the

backstop into the sand box. Chris stood and looked at the arrangement for a minute.

“You know, if I add a couple of braces to the top of the frame and connect them with another piece of angle, the top of the frame will push against that wall,” Chris said. He took two measurements and returned 15 minutes later with a square U shaped bracket that he’d drilled holes in. He held the frame in place and marked where the holes hit the frame. Using a cordless drill, he drilled two holes in the frame and got Gary and Clarence to support the brace while he bolted it to the frame. There was a gap of about 5/8” between the brace and the concrete wall.

Chris went back to his house and got a 3’ long piece of 1”x2” lumber. He slid the piece between the brace and the wall. It fit snugly. He drilled two small holes in the back brace and put screws through the holes and screwed them into the 1”x2”. The whole rig fit solidly against the wall. Meanwhile they had been hauling sand from around the tract and filled the sandbox to the top. Gary used two #40 paper clamps to hold a silhouette target in place.

They were ready to go. Gary laid a piece of newspaper on top of the sand and set up a folding table and folding chair on the street in front of Dick’s house. He fired a single shot from his 9422 22LR into the center of the target and walked down to inspect the target and the newspaper. He hit the target dead center, but a little high. There was a hole in the newspaper where the bullet was deflected downward into the sand.

“That works great,” Gary said, “Who wants to shoot first?”

When the shooting began, several residents came out of their homes to see what was going on. They had someone standing about every 50’ along the path the bullets took and they stopped anyone who approached the line of fire. Before the day was over, about a third of the residents had their day on the range.

They established a 2-hour period every day when people could shoot. Their little project had resulted in the most practical and most entertaining thing in the tract. Everyone got over being rusty with his or her guns before the end of the week. Not one bullet every ricocheted anywhere except into the sand box.

Of course, all of the shooting brought a Deputy Sheriff to the tract Code 3. After they demonstrated the safety of their backstop, the Deputy even took a turn. He asked them to call the Sheriff’s station each day just before the practice sessions began. He never even thought to tell them it was illegal to shoot within the city limits. He did think to warn them that if they missed the target and backstop, they could be in a world of hurts.

After he left, he checked the houses that were one-half mile beyond the backstop. None were occupied. The Sheriff’s station put out a bulletin to all LEO’s and the military that there was scheduled practice every morning between 9am and 11am. They were advised to avoid using 47th Street East between Avenue R and Avenue R-4 during that time period. The resident’s invited the LA County Sheriff Deputies to use the range any

morning they needed to practice.

Gary made it a point to listen to Aaron Brown every night on CNN. All through the month of May and well into June, news of increasing death tolls in the Middle East and China were the lead news item. Other countries experienced deaths too, but the Middle East, the Balkans, China and the US were the worst hit. And of those 4, the US had the lowest per capita death rate due to Ebola. The death rates ran as high as 90% in the Middle East and Balkans. China wasn't releasing any death figures. The total deaths in the US were surprisingly low, all things being considered with a little over 12 million deaths being attributed to the terrorist Ebola attack. With no new cases in the US for 3 consecutive weeks, Bush announced that the quarantine was being lifted as of July 15th. Between the a-bombs, and related deaths and the Ebola virus, about 26 million Americans had died. Bad, bad, bad. The upside was that it was now safe to begin rebuilding the cities, CDC was beginning to test a vaccine that might reduce the mortality rate from Ebola to as low as 20 percent if you were vaccinated before being exposed, assuming the vaccine worked as expected; and the Middle East was no longer a major problem for the world. One other thing; the US was no longer the world's policeman. All US troops had been withdrawn from everywhere in the world.

On the afternoon of June 18th, a LA County Deputy stopped by the tract and advised them that they were going to have to suspend use of the shooting range immediately. The Deputy cited the apparent end of the Ebola crisis and increased military traffic on 47th Street East, which was also California Highway 138. He didn't mention the hundreds of complaints the Sheriff's substation had received over the gunfire.

"Will," Darlene said, "Of course we'll comply immediately. It sounds like things are starting to turn around."

"Things aren't nearly as good as the TV is reporting Darlene," Deputy Will Sampson told her. "For one thing, all imports of oil have ceased. The bombs took out several California refineries and when the quarantine ends in July, California will be forced to import almost all of its gasoline from other states. The talk is that gasoline will be around \$4 a gallon and in short supply. The gang bangers have gotten organized and they began hitting neighborhoods looking for food."

"We know," Darlene said, "A bunch of them tried to hit us."

"We figured that was Moon Shadows," Will said, "We cleaned up the bodies. Was anyone hurt?"

"A couple of flesh wounds are all," Darlene said, "Chris's son Matt was shot in the arm and Gary got a graze on his cheek."

"Gary was on our watch list before everything went to hell," Will said, "Him and a friend of his, Ron Green."

“Really?” Darlene responded, eager to learn more, “Ron Green and his family are temporarily living in the house across the street from Gary.”

“So that’s where he disappeared to,” Will said, “Between the two of them, they had over 40 guns and Gary was known to be a diehard Survivalist.”

“Did they ever break any laws?” Darlene asked.

“Not that we know of, no,” Will said, “But I bet if we could get a search warrant, we’d find all kinds of illegal stuff.”

“Please don’t look,” Darlene pleaded, “The two of them saved out butt’s; more than once, too. I’d be the first one to admit that they’re pretty conservative and maybe even a little odd. But, you’d end up fighting a lot of the resident’s if you even tried to mess with them.”

“We’ve got bigger fish to fry Darlene,” Will said, “Those gang banger’s I mentioned have gone to ground somewhere and we’re too busy trying to find them to worry about a couple of gun nuts.”

Five minutes after Will left, Darlene and her daughter were out passing the word that the shooting range was shut down, the gang banger’s were massing for an attack and the Sheriff was keeping his eye on Ron and Gary. By the time the gossip had made its way to Ron and Gary, it was being suggested that there were warrants for their arrest.

“Warrant’s for our arrest, huh?” Gary spat the words, “Bullcrap! The only law I’ve ever broken was to buy those 20-round magazines. I had all of the 30-round mags for the Mini-14’s long before the law passed. On the other hand, as soon as it’s safe to travel, I’m headed to Arizona. I’m going to pick up some AR-15’s.”

“How the hell are you going to do that?” Ron asked. “Assuming they’ll be selling guns again, you have to be a resident to buy guns in Arizona.”

“I am!” Gary announced.

“You am what?” Ron asked.

“I am an Arizona resident,” Gary replied.

“What?” Ron countered, “You’re a California resident.”

Gary laughed, got up, and went to his office. He came back carrying his lock box. He opened it up and pulled out a bundle of papers.

“There you go Ron,” Gary said, handing Ron his Arizona driver’s license. “Years ago, I needed a copy of my California birth certificate. I wrote to the Alameda Country Record-

er and asked what I needed to do to get the birth certificate. They wanted certain information and \$10.

"I complied and got a copy of my birth certificate. After we moved to California, I rented one of those private mailboxes and when I was in San Francisco on an audit I searched for people who were born in Alameda the same time I was but had died. I found a name and did the same thing and got the boy's birth certificate."

"So, you're two people?" Ron asked.

"Three," Gary responded smiling. "After we moved to Palmdale I did the same thing again. Then, one time when we we're in Mesa visiting Dad and Gayle, I got a private mailbox and used the address and the California birth certificate to get an Arizona drivers license. I have the mail forwarded to my private mailbox here in Palmdale."

"What did you do with the other birth certificate?" Ron asked.

"Same thing," Gary said handling Ron his Nevada's driver's license. "I also have passport for each name and a small bank account in each name. Every time we had a few extra dollars, I'd dump a little money into the Arizona and Nevada bank accounts."

"Pretty slick," Ron said, "But if you every get caught, you'll be in a world of hurts."

"No doubt about that," Gary acknowledged, "But I never use the other licenses or anything so both records are sparking clean."

"You don't even have a California license do you?" Clarence finally butted in.

"Nope. When I got sick last year, I turned it in and got a California ID." Gary admitted. "What say you two? Want to make a trip to Arizona when the quarantine is lifted? We can go up to Nevada too, if we need to."

"I don't know about that Gary, I'll have to think about it," Ron replied.

"Me too," Clarence said, "I've never broke a law I know of."

At the homeowner's meeting, it was decided to lift the self-imposed 90-day quarantine of the housing tract. They still couldn't go anywhere until July 15th, but the danger from Ebola had apparently passed. The guard patrols would still be maintained through July 15th, but with fewer people. Gary and Ron tried to debunk the rumors that suggested they were wanted criminals. Surely, they suggested, the Sheriff would have arrested them by now if that were true. Darlene came to their support announcing that she'd only said that the Sheriff had them on a watch list.

Gary finally received a letter from Derek. His unit was being given two-weeks leave beginning July 15th; then they were being reassigned to Los Angeles to help with the

cleanup. If he had the chance, he promised, he'd try to get to Palmdale to see them. He'd heard from Mary and everyone in Iowa was fine, more or less. Damon wasn't handling being cooped up too well, but Damon never handled anything too well.

Gary finally persuaded Ron and Clarence to accompany him to Arizona on July 15th. They could buy some pre-ban high capacity mags and Gary would see about a couple of AR-15's. They set out on the morning of the 15th headed for Phoenix. A few hours later, about 30 miles east of Indio at Chiriaco Summit, site of the General George S. Patton Memorial Museum, they came upon a shot up convoy of 4 Humvees.

They got out to see if they could do anything to help the soldiers. They'd all bled out, but not before they'd taken their attackers with them. From what they could tell, the convoy had been ambushed by a large group of gangbanger's. The 3 men talked it over, and then systematically gathered the pistols, rifles and shotguns from both groups and loaded them into Ron's trunk. They found extra mags and ammo in one of the Humvees and loaded those into the trunk too.

"There's no reason to go to Phoenix anymore," Gary suggested, "Besides, it might be more dangerous than I imagined. Why don't we turn around and notify the Sheriff in Indio of the ambush and go back home?"

"Well, I need some gas," Ron commented.

"Chevron station right there Ron, let's fill up and get out of here," Gary pointed.

When they pulled into the Chevron station, everyone one was dead. Apparently the gangbanger's had hit the station first. They filled Ron's tank with gas. Jeez, 4.299 per gallon if they'd had to pay. They headed back down the mountain to Indio. On the outskirts of Indio, they flagged down a Deputy Sheriff and reported the carnage at Chiriaco Summit. The Deputy told them to wait for another Deputy to get their information and took off, code 3.

The guys weren't waiting for anyone and they headed for Palm Springs at code 3 themselves. They didn't stop until they were back at Moon Shadows. When they got there, they unloaded everything from Ron's trunk into Gary's garage.

Later, the 3 men inventoried and serviced the weapons they had collected.

"It looks like we have a total of 22 M-16A2s and M-4 carbines," Gary said. "Plus two M-249s. Let's see, there are 4 Beretta M92's with 3 mags each. I think the M-249 mags hold 200 rounds each and there are 10 of them."

"The gang banger's had some AK's, shotguns and a collection of handguns," Ron said sorting through the weapon's they'd taken off the dead gangsters. Plenty of mags, but no extra ammo."

“Do you suppose we can get ammo from the gun store?” Gary asked.

“Probably,” Ron replied, “Why don’t we try and sell her all of the oddball weapons and take the proceeds in 7.62×39mm, 5.56×45mm and 9mm ammo? We aren’t all that long on cash.”

“I have plenty of money in my Iowa account,” Gary said, “And I can use the debit cards to pull money out of the Arizona and Nevada accounts, too.”

“I’ll bet it will be cash only Gary,” Clarence suggested, “You’d better see if you can pull money out of those accounts from an ATM.”

They sorted through the guns and ended up with a sizable quantity to dispose of. The next morning, they stopped by the Wells Fargo ATM and pulled out \$300 from each of Gary’s accounts. The gun dealer was open but she wasn’t offering the best prices on the collection of weapons. They didn’t care; the guns hadn’t cost them anything. By the time they were done haggling, they got enough out of the guns to buy her out of 7.62×39mm, 5.56×45mm, 7.62×51mm Aussie surplus and 9mm. They also cleaned her out of .22LR bricks. She didn’t have any 00 Buck, so they had to settle for #4 Buck. She had a Ruger Vaquero in the case in .357 Magnum and Gary shelled out cash for the gun and a western rig. She told him to come back on August 3rd to pick up the revolver.

Gary picked up the revolver on the 3rd and promptly took it home and put 6 rounds through it from 50’ at a silhouette target. At the sound of the shots, Darlene came on a dead run.

“You know you can’t use the range Gary,” Darlene said.

“That’s ok Darlene, I’m done,” he replied and walked off.

When a Deputy pulled in a while later to investigate the reported gunshots, Darlene played dumb. The 6 holes in the silhouette were in a group about the size of a pack of cigarettes. And Gary did have a short fuse.



## Survivalist – Chapter 6 – Gangsters

Most of the US was back to normal. Well, as normal as it could be, under the circumstances. The loss of so many American lives had solved the unemployment problem; anyone who wanted to work had their choice of jobs. The stock markets had reopened, but trading was suspended on many of the stocks until the problems in Nevada and California were sorted out.

The CDC reported that the testing of the Ebola vaccine was positive and pharmaceutical houses rushed to produce the vaccine. President Bush's popularity had jumped 20% in the most recent polls. Senator John Kerry was trying to claim that Bush should have known that terrorists were going to attack the US with a-bombs and the Ebola Virus.

When questioned about Kerry's remarks, Bush couldn't keep from laughing out loud. And try as they might, the liberal news media couldn't spin Kerry's remarks to make Kerry look good. Rush said the Kerry was suffering from athlete's foot of the tongue.

Derek got a weekend off in mid-August. He made his way to Palmdale to visit his Dad. Gary was so excited to see Derek that he could hardly talk at first. According to Derek, they were putting more energy into fighting off the gang's than they were actually putting into doing cleanup. Resident's from the San Fernando Valley had been released from the temporary FEMA shelters and had returned home. They were doing most of the cleanup and the military was providing guard duty.

Gary showed Derek the weapons they had salvaged from the Chiriaco Summit massacre. Derek's eyes almost popped out when he saw the 2 SAWs.

"Jeez Dad," Derek said, "Be careful you don't get caught with any of these military weapons. We're arresting anyone who has a military weapon on the theory that they killed the soldier and stole the weapon."

"That wasn't the case Derek" Gary insisted, "We just salvaged those weapons."

"Maybe, but you didn't turn them over to the LEOs," Derek countered. "That's what you should have done."

"I know, son," Gary replied, "But until the military takes care of those gangs, I intend to hold on to them. You don't suppose that you could get me more ammo for the SAWs do you?"

"Are you kidding?" Derek responded. "At the end of the day, we have to unload our mags and count the bullets when we turn them in."

"But, what about the ammo you've expended?" Gary asked, "Do you have to turn in all of the empty brass, too?"

“Of course not,” Derek replied.

“Well, then why don’t you keep a couple of SAW mags and report the ammo as expended?” Gary suggested.

“I don’t carry a SAW, Dad,” Derek protested, “I carry an M-16.”

“But you must have a buddy who carries a SAW,” Gary replied. “Just see what you can do, ok?”

“Ok, but no promises, Dad,” Derek relented.

The Gas Company finally called Dick back to work. When the boss saw Dick’s note about the generators and gasoline, he wadded it up and threw it in the trash. He told Dick to bring back the generators and he’d forget about the gasoline. Dick was only too happy to comply. He was sent to LA to repair gas lines and was working 16 hours a day.

The Gas Company had trailers set up for the men to sleep in and rotated the shifts like they did on a ship. Hot bunking was the order of the day. They worked 10 days on, 4 days off. Dick was bringing home paychecks that staggered even him. The best part about it was that he was too tired to spend the money and his bank account was getting fat.

He had met Derek and knew him on sight. One day, Derek’s unit was providing the gas line repair crew with security. Derek approached Dick when Dick took his lunch break and told Dick he had something for him. They went over to Derek’s Humvee and Derek gave him two cardboard boxes. He told Dick to give them to his Dad.

When Dick got his next 4-day break, he delivered the two heavy boxes to Gary. Each box held 4 loaded SAW magazines. Gary was looking forward to Derek’s next visit so he could thank him for the ammo. Derek showed up the evening of Friday, September 17th. He was carrying two suitcases and each held 4 more SAW magazines.

“That’s the last of it Dad,” Derek explained, “They’re starting to get suspicious, so I can’t run any more risks and get you any more SAW ammo.”

“That’s ok son,” Gary said, “You gave us 16 magazines and we already had 10. I’d guess that 16 magazines would burn out the barrels on a SAW anyway, am I right?”

“That would depend on how hot you got the barrels,” Derek replied, “It could be quicker, but you should be able to put 3,200 rounds through one of them without a problem. It’s funny you should mention that Dad, that’s why I have to cut you off on ammo.”

“What do you mean?” Gary asked.

"I've been getting all of the SAW ammo from one guy," Derek explained. "They monitor the round consumption and pull the SAW's in to be re-barreled after so many rounds. They said his barrel didn't have nearly as many rounds through it as his ammo consumption indicated. He got spooked and cut me off."

"I probably have enough anyway Derek," Gary replied. "I'm running out of places to hide it."

"I'm going to call Mary if that's ok," Derek said.

"Of course it is," Gary responded, "But tell her to expect some boxes from Ammoman."

"Huh?" Derek responded.

"I got my Internet service back yesterday Derek," Gary explained, "I ordered 60 20-round M-14 magazines and 200 30-round M-16 magazines. They're being shipped to Mary. Ask her to re-box them and ship them to me. I'll mail her a check to cover shipping."

"Ok Dad, but you can give me the money, I'm sending her my full paychecks already and I'm broke," Derek replied.

Gary had 2 more M1A's on order from the gun dealer. They'd be in by the time the 10-day waiting period was up, he had been told. With any luck, the magazines would be here soon after. They had plenty of ammo for the M1As. Ron and Clarence had each ordered one, too. He hoped that Ron either got magazines from the guy in Lancaster or ordered them from Ammoman himself. Derek returned after 30 minutes.

"She already received the boxes from Ammoman," Derek said, "It must have cost you a bundle to have them shipped overnight."

"It did," Gary admitted, "Does she have enough money to send them to me overnight?"

"No, you'll just have to settle for UPS, Dad," Derek replied.

"I'll still have them in 5 or 6 days," Gary advised. "I won't have the guns for a week, so that will work out fine."

"What guns?" Derek asked.

"I ordered 2 more M1A's," Gary explained. "You can never have too much fire power. So tell me, what's it been like down in LA?"

"We haven't had any more attacks from the gangs for almost 10 days," Derek said. "Either we got them all or they've gone to ground."

“Actually, I’m surprised that you had as much action as you’ve had Derek,” Gary said, “A Deputy told Darlene a while back that the gangs were going to ground and they were having trouble locating them.”

“I’ll report that when I get back Sunday night,” Derek responded. “We were wondering.”

“When are you going to get another stripe?” Gary asked.

“As soon as I can get to the next phase of NCO Academy,” Derek replied. “I am due for a promotion, but I have to take the class before I can get the stripe.”

“They sure do it different than when I was in the service.” Gary observed.

“Who was you’re C.O.?” Derek asked, “Custer or Grant?”

“Right,” Gary retorted. “I’m going to bed; I’ve had enough insults for one night.”

The next day, Derek dismantled the SAW’s and gave them a proper cleaning. Gary hadn’t done too badly, but he hadn’t been able to figure out how to dismantle the weapons. He had the spare barrels for the SAW’s. They were in canvas bags and labeled to identify which gun they went to. Derek told Gary not to interchange the barrels because of the headspacing issue.

He also told Gary to try and limit the weapon to 3 round bursts; from the free standing and bipod positions, the weapon wandered off target after 3 rounds. Derek asked Gary how many grenades they had for the M-203’s that were attached to some of the M-4s. Gary told him they only had what the soldiers had been carrying. Derek said he would try to get them a few more grenades, but no promises. Gary gave Derek \$100 to cover the shipping costs for the magazines.

Many of the men in the tract took temporary jobs helping to clean up and rebuild Los Angeles. It gave them income until they could return to their regular jobs. It took them a while to get even with their bills, but the mortgage companies forgave late penalties and deferred the missed payments to the end of the loans.

The utility companies didn’t bill for gas, electricity or water for the period of March 24, 2004 through July 15, 2004. Both of the foregoing courtesy of a Presidential speech that implied anyone who did would be examined by veritable shopping lists of federal agencies for everything from price gouging to being downright un-American. Besides, a lot of records had been destroyed and it was easier to just start fresh. Unpaid bills from prior to March 24th could be prorated over a 6-month period.

With the men earning record wages and the bill forgiveness, many of the wives took the paychecks and stockpiled food and water. Who knew what would happen next? A-bombs and Ebola? Maybe an asteroid would hit the planet. And that Gary was such a jerk, none of them wanted to be beholding to him again. They even began to buy fire-

arms. Since Gary and Ron bought all of their guns from the same store, the people figured that the men knew something they didn't.

The store began to do a land office business and the owner began to order Mossberg and Remington shotguns, Mini-14's, and M1A's in the largest quantities her distributors would supply. People were buying ammo by the case too. It wasn't limited to the Moon Shadows residents either. Her prices were the lowest in the Valley. Pretty soon, the other gun stores were forced to lower their prices to compete with her.

Dave was working in LA and spending his free time with his ex-wife, so Ron and Linda were in no danger of being put out of Dave's house. Every 10 days, Dick came dragging a box from Derek.

One time it was 40mm grenades for the M-203's. Another time it was M-203's. The next time it was 8 more SAW magazines. Meanwhile Gary was getting more and more nervous. He was so uptight that he'd bite your head off if you didn't ease into a conversation with him. Finally, he called a company that installed razor wire and had his block wall topped with razor wire.

After that, he was a bit more agreeable. The resident's took the hint and the company ended up stringing razor wire around the whole tract. By the time they were done, Gary was back to being rather pleasant. He even quit griping about Darlene being such a gossip.

Gary, Ron and Clarence now constituted the guard force for the housing tract. None of them were able to work and all of the other men were working in LA helping to rebuild the city or had finally been able to return to their old jobs.

The three men had borrowed 3 golf carts from the golf course and they rode around Moon Shadows making nice to the residents. Some of the people decided that the guys weren't all that bad. One of them told Gary that he looked silly wearing jeans, cowboy boots, a hat and a golf shirt. Why didn't he get some western cut shirts if he was going to play cowboy? Gary made a beeline for Wal-Mart and picked up 7 blue work shirts. It was as close as he could come to a western style shirt and cover his round little belly. Were all cowboys skinny?

When Derek came up on October 15th, he had a surprise for his Dad. He was carrying a military duffel bag and when he began to unload it, Gary recognized the SAW. Chris was home that weekend and Gary persuaded him to fabricate pedestal mounts on the golf carts for the 3 SAW's. The three old geezers also had rifle racks mounted on the golf carts and were driving around armed with an M1A, an M-16, and a riot gun in the rifle rack.

By this time, they all had a Marlin .357 Magnum rifle and some sort of a .357 S&W revolver. Clarence looked a little strange in a cowboy hat, the only thing Gary and Ron had ever seen him wear was a baseball cap, but the 3 put in long hours guarding the

tract and people could forgive the old men their fantasies. One thing was certain; each one of them was toting enough firepower to put down a small army.

On the morning of October 22nd, the men were having coffee before starting their rounds. The phone rang and it was Derek urgently wanting to talk with his Dad.

“Dad, this is Derek,” Derek said, “Just listen, I only have a minute. A large gang attacked Palm Springs yesterday. They killed a lot of people, stripped some houses and disappeared. We’re heading out on I-10 to San Bernardino. They could be headed your way, so button up. Got to go. Bye.”

Gary hadn’t even had a chance to say hello. He related the call to Ron and Clarence and Clarence went to ask Patti to move the truck and trailer back across the front of the housing tract. Ron and Gary went from door to door warning everyone who was at home what Derek had suggested; trouble could be headed their way.

The men went back to their homes and loaded the magazines for the rifles. Anyone who didn’t have a Mini-14 was given an M-16 or M-4 and 13 magazines to use. Spotters were posted at the 4 corners of the tract and they sat down to wait for the gang. The men who were home on their break stayed home. The ones, who came home on a break, got some sleep and joined the swelling ranks of residents.

Two days later, the spotter manning the southeast corner of the tract reported smoke in the distance, probably in Pearblossom. Two hours later, the same person reported smoke coming from Littlerock, just five miles away. At that rate, they’d be at the tract in two hours.

Sharon came down to Chris’s garage to tell Gary that Derek had called again. The Army force was in Littlerock, right behind the gang members. It was a force of several hundred. Some of the gang members were making a stand and some appeared to be moving out of Littlerock towards Palmdale. The Army would be there as soon as possible, but not before the gangsters reached Palmdale. The Army was going north to Palmdale Boulevard and would come across to 47th Street East. Their ETA was 20-25 minutes.

The resident’s went to the east block wall of the housing tract. The 3 SAWs were removed from their pedestals and slipped through the razor wire to sit on top of the wall. About 10 minutes later a large group of vehicles began to pass the tract on 47th Street East.

The 3 men opened up with the SAWs and everyone began firing into the vehicles. The firing continued for about 5 minutes. By that time, 47th was completely blocked by shot-up vehicles. It had been 20 minutes since Derek’s call and as the firing began to let up, the Army arrived. The Mark-19 equipped Humvees spat out a hail of grenades and the Ma Deuce equipped Humvees rained bullets all the way to Avenue S, a mile south, and beyond.

The resident's held their fire and the Humvees went around the vehicles on the sidewalks and continued south, firing into the vehicles as they proceeded. Gary, Ron and Clarence made a hasty trip to Gary's garage to store the SAWs. They told everyone with an M-16 or M-4 to bring them to the garage as well. The garage door was just closing as a Humvee pulled into the housing tract. Derek was driving the vehicle and a Captain sat on the passenger side. They got out and walked up to the 3 men.

"Dad, this is Captain Burger," Derek introduced his superior, "Sir, this is my father Gary. That gentleman is Ron Green and the other man is Clarence Rawlings."

"Gentlemen." Capt. Burger said, "If I didn't know better, I'd say you cut loose on those gangsters with machine guns."

"Uh..." Gary started to say.

"I didn't ask if you had any Gary," Burger laughed, "I just said that it looked like you had some. Actually, I'd rather not know. If I did, I'd be forced to confiscate them."

"That was one hell of a barrage of fire we put out with those Mini-14's and M1A's, wasn't it?" Gary commented.

Captain Burger laughed; he wasn't fooled for a minute. There was simply no way that you could stitch that straight of a line with a rifle.

"Anyway, we really appreciate you people stopping that bunch," Burger continued. "There's another bunch down towards San Diego, but we pretty much have them taken care of, too. Our forces in San Francisco took out that group last week. With any luck, you've seen the last of trouble."

"I hope so," Gary responded. "Are you getting any better news about what's going on around the world than we get on CNN?"

"Not really," Burger said, "Since we don't have any troops overseas anymore, about all the news we get is from the media and the CIA. And the CIA usually gets everything wrong anyway. I can tell you that satellite over flights of China show that they appear to have the Ebola under control finally.

"They're starting to vaccinate all of the military personnel with the Ebola vaccine. I guess we're the guinea pigs. If it doesn't kill us off, I'd guess that they'd start vaccinating the general population. I heard the Bush wants to vaccinate every person in the US against all illnesses including smallpox. That will be a blessing in disguise."

That evening Aaron Brown reported that Bush had risen another 5% in the most recent popularity poll. Even Ralph Nader was ahead of John Kerry. Kerry's most recent faux pas was to demand that the Assault Weapon Ban not be allowed to sunset. Six months earlier, such a stance would have gotten him votes.

After all that had happened to the US since March 24th, the populous wasn't so certain that that was a good idea. At least the populous of California didn't like the idea anymore. They were pressing Arnold to change the California law back to the Pre-Stockton days, and Arnold was seriously considering introducing the repeal. Brown also reported that Senator Clinton was under serious consideration as Kerry's running mate. Gary sure hoped so. That would end her political career.

The next day, the unholy trio spent hours cleaning the weapons in Gary's garage. They hadn't used any 40mm grenades and very little ammunition. They still had 26 magazines for the SAW's. They mounted the SAW's back on the golf carts and resumed their patrols after all of the weapons were cleaned. The men of the housing tract who were due or overdue on their jobs returned to Los Angeles. Two days later, Derek came driving in with a Humvee towing a 50kw diesel generator and the Humvee was packed with ammo and grenades.

"Captain Burger said that as long as you had military weapons, you ought to have ammo for them," Derek explained. "There are six cases of HEDP 40mm rounds, 20 cases of SAW ammo and 3 more SAWs in the Humvee. He told me to get the serial numbers of the SAW's you already had and he would sign all of them out to you on loan. Same thing goes for any other military arms you have. We're bringing 3 more generators and some diesel fuel for them tomorrow. Do you have room for that much equipment?"

"Derek, we'll take anything the Army has to offer," Gary said. "Let me get you the serial numbers of all of the military weapons we took off those soldiers up at Chiriaco Summit. You be sure and thank the Captain for us won't you."

"How many residents are there here?" Derek asked.

"Why?" Gary replied.

"I don't know, Captain Berger asked me to find out," Derek replied.

"I'll have to check with Darlene," Gary said, "Frankly I have no idea. I'd say at least 96 adults, for sure. That's two per house plus Clarence, Lucy, Kevin and John. Oh, add 4 to that for your sisters and their husbands."

"That's close enough Dad," Derek said, "I'll tell him 100 plus. I've got to get going. Where do you want the generator parked?"

"Park it in front of Darlene's house," Gary said, "Second house from the corner on Northstar where you come into the tract."

"See you tomorrow," Derek said. He got in the Humvee. The contents were already safely stored in Gary's garage.



## The Survivalist – Chapter 7 – Chinese Anyone?

The next day, 3 Humvees arrived towing 50kw generators. Gary looked into one of the Humvees and noticed that it was full of ammo.

“Did you bring us more ammo?” Gary asked Derek.

“Ammo, magazines and rifles, Dad,” Derek replied. “To be exact, 100 rifles and 7 magazines for each rifle. I don’t know how much ammo there is; all that we could pack into 2 Humvees. You figure it out and let me know. Captain Burger said that he wanted you to have at least 3,000 rounds for each of the rifles. I know that there are nowhere near 300 cases of 5.56x45mm. Count it and call me at this number,” he said handing Gary a piece of paper.

“What’s gotten into Burger?” Gary asked.

“Don’t ask me,” Derek replied. “I got promoted, too. Even without NCO Academy. As of tomorrow, I’ll be a Staff Sergeant. Maybe you guys could kill some more bad guys, I could use the money.”

“Just send them our way Derek,” Gary laughed, “We’ll be glad to oblige.”

(Be careful what you wish for, Gary. God has a sense of humor and might just give it to you.)

There were 72 cases of 5.56x45mm ammo; or 720 rounds per rifle and Gary couldn’t believe they would ever need that much. As it turned out, after they issued the M16’s to every person aged 16 or older, all that were left were the 4 M-4s with the M-203’s mounted.

They had never mounted the extra M-203’s that Derek had supplied. There were 12 of them. The residents had 118 M16A2’s so that meant that about every 10th person would get an M-203 for their rifle. They had six cases of 40mm rounds plus the rounds they recovered from the massacred soldiers. That worked out to 6 grenades for each M-203 and the soldier’s loads could stay with the M-4s.

Gary was certain that the only reason they had the weapons, munitions and generators was because the Captain felt sorry for an Iowan stranded in California. The fact that Burger happened to really like Derek didn’t hurt either. Derek had been with Burger for a long time and had been his driver, loader and now was the gunner on Burger’s tank.

He was equally certain that the only reason the Sheriff’s deputies were so cooperative was that Darlene lived in the complex and knew every Deputy stationed in the Antelope Valley. Sometimes the line between doing with and doing without was too fine to see. Gary’s idea of a fair fight was like the scene from the movie, “Raiders of the Lost Ark”. In the scene, an Arab pulled a sword to fight Indy. Indy pulled his gun and shot the SOB.

(The back story about that scene was that Harrison Ford was sick and wasn't up to filming the scene the script called for. "The fight scenes in the town were filmed in Kairouan; by then Ford was suffering from dysentery and did not want to shoot a fight scene between Indiana and a swordsman. He said to Spielberg 'Let's just shoot the sucker.' Spielberg agreed, scrapped the rest of the fight scene, and filmed the gag of Indiana quickly gunning down the swordsman.")

You didn't stand out in the open and challenge someone to draw. You stayed behind the fence and shot them when they came into view. It could be called the Wyatt Earp school of thought. The only face-to-face conflict Earp was ever in that Gary knew of was the Ok Corral and Wyatt didn't start that. Earp reportedly preferred to walk up behind a bad guy and hit them on the head with a gun. If anything, Ron was of the same mind. Gary had heard Ron say, "screw 'em, shoot 'em in the back" more times than he could remember. If you won, it was a fair fight. If you lost, it didn't matter. A war crime was whatever the loser did that the winner didn't approve of.

The 3 of them went about patrolling the tract on their golf carts and more often than not, they sat in Chris's garage just watching the entrance to the tract. Life became, well, boring. They sat a TV up in the garage and watched the news channels. All of them began to notice that every hour of news was the same as the previous hour with maybe one and in some cases, two, new stories.

They left the trailer parked across one lane of traffic at the entrance of the tract, creating a bottleneck. They had a spotting scope on a table and whenever a car came into the tract, they looked through the scope to see who the person was. Gary finally knew who all of his neighbors were by sight, though not by name.

Derek must have gotten pretty busy in Los Angeles because it was almost Thanksgiving and Gary hadn't heard from him. Gary had tried the number Derek had given him but the phone rang and rang and was never answered. He'd sent Mary an email but Mary wrote back that she hadn't heard from Derek since near the end of October. That sort of got Gary to worrying, but he knew that no news are usually good news. The military wasn't so good about getting you good news, but they were more than efficient at getting you bad news.

It just so happened that Gary had the urge to go scavenging. He'd been stationed at Edwards and he wanted to get there and see what he could pickup. He spent a day and a half talking Ron and Clarence into it. They got into Ron's car, finally, and headed for Edwards using the front way through Rosamond. The gate is located about half way between Rosamond and the main base. When they arrived at the gate, a soldier manned it.

"Sorry sir, the base is open but closed to non-authorized personnel," the PFC said.

"When did that happen? I understood the base was closed period," Gary replied.

"We've been here since the 25th of October Sir," The PFC responded.

"Didn't know that private. Can I ask you a question?" Gary asked.

"Yes Sir," the PFC replied.

"You look familiar, but I can't put my finger on it. What outfit are you with?" Gary asked.

"First of the One Thirteenth Sir," the PFC replied.

"Redhorse?" Gary asked.

"Yes Sir," the PFC responded.

"You know Staff Sergeant Derek Olsen private?" Gary continued.

"Yes Sir," He's Captain Burger's driver," the PFC said.

"And he's my son," Gary smiled. "Any chance you can get a hold of him?" Gary pleaded.

"Sorry Sir, Sergeant Olsen is off base at the moment," the PFC said.

"Can I leave him a message?" Gary was getting frustrated.

"Yes Sir," the PFC replied.

"Tell that asshole to call his father," Gary said, "Or his father is coming back and kick his butt!"

"Do I have to phrase it like that Sir?" the PFC looked terrified.

"Son, I don't care how you tell him, just tell him. Ok?" Gary responded.

"I'll see that he gets the message Mr. Olsen," the PFC let out a sigh of relief.

"Let's go Ron, I want to be home when he calls," Gary laughed.

"Are you sure he'll call?" Ron asked.

"Do you have any doubt he'll get the message?" Gary asked.

"Nope!" Ron laughed.

"He'll call." Gary said.

The phone rang in the middle of Aaron's Brown broadcast. It was Derek.

"I understand you tried to get on base today," Derek stated.

"Absolutely right," Gary said, "We were scavenging. I see you got my message."

"Jeez Dad," Derek was not serious, Gary could tell, "Did you have to give the guy such a hard time?"

"No, but it was a lot of fun," Gary laughed. "What are you doing up at Edwards?"

"Clean up," Derek said, "The Air Force is coming back in."

"Ok. Anyway you said to call you about the ammo," Gary continued. "Is that offer still open?"

"Yes, how many cases did you have?" Derek asked.

"Seventy two," Gary said.

"I pass that along to Captain Burger, Dad," Derek said, "It might be a couple of days; the ammo has to come up from LA."

"Have you called Mary recently?" Gary inquired.

"No sir, haven't had the chance," Derek replied.

"Do you want me to call her or are you going to call her?" Gary pushed.

"I'll call her Dad," Derek said, "Have you talked to her?"

"Yes and she a little worried about where you disappeared to," Gary explained.

"I'll call her right now, and Dad?" Derek asked.

"Yes?" Gary said.

"No more gate antics, please." Derek said, "I just got the stripe."

"Ok kid, keep in touch will you?" Gary said.

"Yes Dad," Derek said and hung up.

Derek didn't explain to his father that they had found most of the missing gang bangers at Edwards and had them holed up and surrounded at the south base. He should have,

because some of them managed to slip through the soldiers encircling them. That little group of 20 or so men was headed to Palmdale.

They should have gone anywhere but to Palmdale, especially not to east Palmdale. The night shift, all women, caught them trying to get through the razor wire at the east end of Moonraker Road. Gary, Ron and Clarence came boiling out of the houses when the gunfire started. By the time they got there, they had missed all of the fun. Fifteen minutes later two squad cars came rolling in code 3. This time, it was the women who had to explain discharging firearms within the city limits. Two days later at zero dark thirty, a six by rolled in with 300 (900 round case, containing 30 boxes, each containing 3 10-round stripper clips) cases of 5.56×45mm ammo.

The doorbell ringing awakened Gary and Sharon. Sharon answered the door and yelled at Gary who was just putting on his robe. He half stumbled down the hall to the living room.

A Corporal was standing at the door. "Are you Mr. Olsen, Sir?" the Corporal asked.

"Yes," Gary answered.

"Sir, I have 300 cases of M193 ball ammunition for you. Where would you like us to unload it?" the Corporal asked.

"Uh...can you unload it right in front of my garage door?" Gary groped to kick-start his brain.

Sharon put on a pot of coffee and Gary dropped into his chair in front of his computer. He watched the soldiers unloading the ammo and stacking it on his drive way. They stacked it 10 boxes to the row, 5 rows high. They ended up with 6 piles like that, all neatly stacked. He saw the Corporal walking toward the front door with a clipboard and headed back to the living room. He opened the door just as the Corporal was reaching for the doorbell.

"Sir, I need you to acknowledge delivery of the ammunition. You can count it if you like," the Corporal said.

"Already did, son," Gary replied signing the sheet.

Gary went into the bedroom and slipped on his dirty clothes from the day before. He'd put on clean clothes after he showered and that wouldn't be until he woke up. Ron was at the front door; apparently the truck had awakened him. Sharon let him in and gave him a cup of coffee. Gary got his coffee cup from the office and joined them.

"How much ammo is there?" Ron asked.

"300 cases," Gary replied.

“Dang,” Ron shook his head, “Are you going to put it all in your garage?”

“Don’t have room Ron,” Gary said, “That’s why I had them put it on the driveway.”

“Well, you can’t leave it sit there,” Ron said.

“That’s right,” Gary said, “We’re going to spend the day distributing it, 3 cases per M-16 rifle. You can start by hauling 18 cases to your house.”

“Let me finish my coffee at least, before I start,” Ron groaned.

“No rush,” Gary groaned back, “This will take all day.”

One hour and 3 cups of coffee later, the 2 were ready to begin. Gary had a list of the M-16’s that had been distributed. He got Audrey’s red wagon and they made 2 trips to Ron’s hauling the 18 cases of ammo. They decided to use the wagon to deliver the ammo to anyone close to Gary’s house and the golf carts to deliver the remainder. Gary had the 4 M-4s and 2 M-16’s. At the end of the day, he still had 24 cases of the M193 ball sitting in his garage.

“We must have screwed up,” he said, “I have too much ammo left.”

“How much ammo was on the Humvees?” Ron asked.

“72 cases,” Gary remembered.

“That makes a total of 372 cases,” Ron said. “We only had a total of 122 rifles and carbines, they just delivered an extra 6 cases.”

“Ok, then that’s right, then” Gary allowed.

“I have a question,” Clarence said, “Why are we being armed so heavily? It just doesn’t make sense to me. If you believe the news on CNN, there aren’t enough Arabs left alive to be a problem for anyone. So, would someone explain to me why we have to be armed like World War III is about to begin?”

“I’ve wondered the same thing myself, partner,” Ron said, “Did Derek tell you anything you’re not sharing with us Gary?”

“He’s been more closed mouth than usual,” Gary said. “And why all of a sudden the urgency to clean up Edwards? It’s not likely that the Air Force is going to be doing any flight testing for a while.”

Therein lay the answer to all of the men’s questions. The satellite over flights of China showed a lot more than just the Chinese recovering from the Ebola virus. They also

showed evidence of a general crop failure. Not just a drought, but nearly 95% of the agricultural land hadn't even been planted this year.

The Ebola virus had hit the agricultural workers very hard. And, those that didn't contract the virus refused to leave their homes to plant. China was massing ships in all of its ports and the CIA's best guess was that they were preparing for war. Even the CIA got it right once in a while.

The word had been passed to unit commanders, especially along the west coast, to do what they could to arm the population. The Iowa National Guard's tanks had been in a sorry state. The state of Iowa, hard pressed for money had purchased older, worn-out Abrams from the Army. The state lacked sufficient money to make the repairs to the tanks. (100% gospel, I promise)

The Army had stepped in finally and rebuilt the tanks, loaded them on railcars and was shipping them to California. Approximately 75% of all fighter and attack aircraft were being moved to Edwards AFB, Beale AFB and Travis AFB. The B-2 bombers had been reassigned from Whitman to Area 51.

Bush had ordered the decommissioning of nuclear weapons halted and the weapons were being reissued to the Air Force and Navy. The Sixth fleet was reassigned from the Med to the west coast and boomers had been reassigned from their previous stations to cover China much more extensively.

Derek knew this, of course, but there simply was no way he could tell his Dad. With his promotion to Staff Sergeant he was also promoted from gunner to tank commander. He wanted to tell his Dad, so badly, too. Gary had been repeatedly asking when Derek would get his own tank. The only thing Derek was able to do was ensure that the people at Moon Shadows were prepared for what he perceived to be inevitable, an invasion by the Chinese.

China was capable of delivering missiles carrying nuclear warheads to the North American continent. And despite the Ebola epidemic they could field a sizable Army. If they had a shortcoming, it was in their capacity to deliver troops the several thousand miles across the Pacific. Since the outbreak of the Ebola virus, every ship that called at a Chinese port had been interred. The Chinese made a small first strike against Japan and seized the auto carriers. The huge ships were capable of carrying 5,000 autos. China had the means to move its vehicles to North America.

Aaron Brown reported the Chinese attack on Japan on his broadcast of November 20, 2004. A light bulb went off in Gary's head and he headed for Ron's. Ron had been watching too and he was standing on the front porch waiting for Gary. They all sat down to watch the remainder of the broadcast. Bush had announced that he deplored the attack by the Chinese. The DEFCON was being raised to DEFCON 3. Having easily defeated the flagging Kerry-Clinton ticket, Bush took his reelection as a confirmation of his heavy-handed tactics. He had, according to Brown, warned the Chinese against further-

ing their aggression.

Linda made a fresh pot of coffee and Ron, Clarence and Gary gathered at the kitchen table.

“I guess that explains why we have so many arms and ammunition,” Gary observed.

“Why would the Chinese attack the US?” Clarence wondered.

“I don’t know,” Gary said, “Maybe they think we are an easy target.”

They visited for a few minutes longer and Gary went home. The phone rang it was Derek.

“Did you see the CNN broadcast tonight Dad?” Derek asked.

“Yes,” Gary replied.

“They rebuilt all of our tanks and shipped them here to California,” Derek reported. “I have my own tank finally, an Abrams M1A2 SEP.”

“I was wondering...” Gary started to say.

“I can’t talk any longer Dad, do the math,” Derek said and hung up.

“Do the math,” Derek had said. Iowa had tanks in California; and the Chinese attacked Japan. That wasn’t hard, to figure, the only question was when.

The Chinese already had a sizable military force aboard ships. With the seizure of the Japanese auto transports, they could move their equipment and it was being loaded as quickly as possible. US satellites had been shifted in orbits and the President observed the process. He contacted Russian Premier Putin and inquired as to Russia’s intentions.

Russia, he was told, was shifting its forces eastward to fend off a possible invasion by the Chinese. If the Chinese invaded, they’d launch missiles, but only aimed at China. Bush advised Putin that the US was at DEFCON 3 and would move to DEFCON 2 when the Chinese sailed. Any missiles launched by the US would also be directed at China. Putin asked Bush to keep him advised of the US’s DEFCON status, it would give him advance warning. He agreed to keep the President advised of developments on their eastern front.

The Chinese forces began to put to sea slowly. As fast as a berth was cleared, another ship moved into the berth and began to load. By December 7th, the entire Chinese task force was at sea. Bush moved the US to DEFCON 2 for the 4th time in history and notified Putin that the Chinese had sailed. Putin advised Bush that their forces were in place to repel a Chinese invasion; the only concern was possible Chinese tactical nu-



clear weapons.

The portion of the Chinese fleet which sailed out of Hong Kong made a brief stop on its way to the United States. Aided by land-based aircraft, the Chinese staged a blitzkrieg attack on Taiwan. In a campaign that lasted barely a week, the Chinese overwhelmed the Taiwanese. Bush ordered the boomers into final position for a launch against China. The Chinese left an occupation force, transported in from China, and the taskforce resumed its journey toward North America.

With the Chinese fleet within 200 miles of North America, the Chinese launched all 24 of its DF-5 2-megaton equipped missiles. Two were aimed at Moscow, 2 each at Washington, New York, Philadelphia, Boston, Denver, Chicago, Atlanta, Dallas, Seattle, and one each at Phoenix, Kansas City, Miami and Salt Lake City. When NORAD observed the launches, ELF messages were sent to the Boomers and the Air Force launched 36 Minuteman III missiles.

Russia launched an additional 18 missiles. Six hours after they had received the ELF notice, the boomers rose to Periscope depth and poked their antennas out of the water. They received a stand down message; the Minutemen and Russian missiles had destroyed every major city in China.

The Chinese forces surged across the border with Siberia. They didn't have any tactical nukes, but the Russians did and were more than willing to use them. They launched a massive barrage of tactical nukes and what was left of the Chinese forces weren't worth risking a single Russian life to kill.

From his airborne command post, George Walker Bush was first horrified and then po'd beyond description. He ordered all US bombers, the B-52s and the B-2s, launched as well as the F-15Es and the F/A-18F Super Hornets. The planes carried a significant portion of the US supply of nuclear weapons. Three hours later, the last of the Chinese fleet wallowed helplessly, taking on water and immobilized by the massive EMP's from the American weapons.

The Chinese guidance systems weren't the most accurate in the world, but they came close enough. The 2-megaton warheads were very effective. The cities targeted with 2 missiles were devastated. The missile aimed for Phoenix landed east and destroyed Mesa and Tempe. The missile aimed at Kansas City exploded right over the bridge connecting Missouri and Kansas and took out Kansas City. The missile aimed for Miami was within 20' of its aimpoint, destroying Miami. The Missile aimed for Salt Lake City struck Provo, sparing much of Salt Lake.

Bush's plane landed at Hagerstown, Maryland and he was transported south to Mount Weather. With the nation in ruins and Russia not much better off, he lowered the alert status to DEFCON 3. He invoked his emergency powers and began to issue orders for military units to move to the destroyed cities. Finally, he declared martial law.

## The Survivalist – Chapter 8 – Aftermath

Gary turned on the TV just as the Larry King Show was scheduled to end. He didn't want to miss any of Aaron Brown's broadcast tonight. All he got was snow and that awful shhh sound. He walked across the street and knocked on Ron's door. Linda let him in and he found Ron sitting at the kitchen table listening to the radio.

"Hey, my TV..." Gary started to say.

Ron waived his hand to shush Gary and turned up the volume on the radio.

*...attacked Moscow and the US cities of Washington, New York, Philadelphia, Boston, Denver, Chicago, Atlanta, Dallas, Seattle, Phoenix, Kansas City, Miami and Salt Lake City. American and Russian forces retaliated, launching a total 54 missiles against China. We have just learned that aircraft from the United States Air Force and the United States Navy dropped nuclear weapons on a fleet of Chinese vessels approximately 200 miles off the west coast.*

*Spokesmen are claiming that the entire Chinese fleet was sunk or was severely damaged and sinking. President Bush ordered the attack from Air Force One. The plane has landed and the President has been transported to Mount Weather in Virginia. The President has declared martial law, imposing a dusk to dawn curfew. Military forces are being moved to the affected cities to begin rescue efforts. The Chinese warheads were believed to be 2-megaton warheads.*

*The cities, which were hit by two warheads, were struck by a ground burst and by a high altitude airburst, compounding the damage and creating large amounts of radioactive fallout. The cities hit by a single warhead were subjected to medium altitude bursts, creating neither the amount of fallout nor the damage. Please stay tuned to this emergency broadcast network station for further announcements.*

"Jeez, 2-megaton warheads," Ron said, "I thought California and Nevada were hit pretty hard and those were only 1-kiloton warheads. How big of a hole does a 2-megaton warhead make?"

"I have no idea, I suppose that ground zero would be about 2 miles across," Gary answered. "I seem to remember reading somewhere that a 1-megaton warhead had a ground zero of just under 1½ mile."

"I cannot imagine this," Clarence said. "How many people do you think will be killed by fallout?"

"Probably lots," Gary suggested, "We haven't had a Civil Defense program for years and they pulled all of the rations and equipment out of the shelters a long time ago."

"I wonder if we're going to have to dodge fallout from bombing those Chinese ships?"

Clarence asked.

“I’d guess that the US did high altitude detonations to avoid fallout,” Gary responded, “After all the prevailing wind would put the fallout right on the west coast. That’s one of the things I hate about Los Angeles County. They make it so hard to build a basement. You build a house up at Rosamond and you don’t get a hassle. It’s not far away and they get the same earthquakes we do. But, it’s in Kern County, so they have different rules.”

“Couldn’t we dig some shelters in the back yards?” Clarence suggested.

“I suppose we could, but it would be like digging in concrete,” Gary offered his opinion. “Personally, I’d be more worried about people than fallout.”

“What do you mean?” Ron asked, “Who in their right mind would want to come to California? We’ve already had the crap kicked out of us.”

“From small bombs, Ron,” Gary replied, “And we’re already rebuilding. That’s been all over the news. There was also that news story how the people in California were stock-piling food. You saw what kind of gang problems we had with the small bombs; imagine what it’s going to be like with large bombs having exploded all over the country. Every low-life will be out trying to get all they can get.”

“What about our kids back in the Midwest?” Ron asked.

“Well Ron, your kids are in western Arkansas and southern Minnesota,” Gary said, “And mine are in central and northern Iowa. Except Derek and he’s got a M1A2 SEP wrapped around him. That beats the hell out of him having the older M1 or M1A1. And it’s basically the same as a M1A2. SEP means Special Equipment Package; it doesn’t really affect the protection. I sure wished he had his tank parked out in the entrance to this tract. Anyway, our kids were a long way from the blasts and they all have basements, so they should be ok.”

“I seem to remember you telling Derek to, and I quote, *just send them our way Derek*,” Ron said. “It sounds like you might just get your wish.”

Bush’s staff was estimating that the death toll from the bombs was 12 to 15 million outright and that up to another 25 million could die from the radiation. He began to wish that he hadn’t won the election.

FEMA was in the process of planning camps and the military was still on the move to the nuked cities. At least they hadn’t hit us in the breadbasket, he thought. Then, Bush made the second correct choice of his political career; he decided to gather the living President’s.

That 2 of the 4 were Democrats wasn't lost on him, but Jimmy Carter was a good man. That had been his problem all along; he was too good and kind to be an effective President. Then again, surely Carter would have some good suggestions on how to deal with a domestic crisis and he was after all a nuclear engineer. Bush instructed the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs to gather up the ex-Presidents.

All of the men who had been working in Los Angeles were making their way back to the housing tract. This time, there wasn't any reason to flee LA and there was an orderly, but urgent, flow of vehicles out of LA. When Dick pulled in, he had the 4 7,500-watt generators on the back of his pickup. Good thinking Dick. Since it was December, they weren't running any air conditioning and if they lost power, they had enough capacity for the tract. The problem was in the northern cities. They had lost their power and there was snow on the ground. No doubt an exodus to warmer climates would begin soon.

When everyone was back at Moon Shadows, Darlene called a meeting. She polled the residents about their food supplies. There was no problem there, if anything, Ron and Gary were the least prepared. They were armed to the teeth and most of them kept plenty of cash on hand, just in case. They might lose electricity, but the water and gas would flow; they were set. After the brief meeting, Gary and Sharon went to Ron and Linda's for coffee and dessert.

"We're going to have to get to Costco tomorrow," Ron suggested.

"Shouldn't be much of a problem Ron," Gary said, "We have plenty of food at the moment and so does most everyone else. If I can add a year's worth for one more family, we'll be covered for a full year. A two year supply doesn't cut it when you have three families in one house."

"I'm in the same boat," Ron said. "Between Clarence and me, we have enough for all of us for 8 or 9 months. Do you think Dick and Dan will let us use their pickups?"

"As long as we fill their tanks, I'm sure they will," Gary replied. With gas at \$4.599 per gallon, that was a safe bet. The next morning, the two men were at Costco at 10am with their Business customer cards in their hands and their pockets filled with cash. They ended up with two of the flatbeds practically overflowing with food.

When Gary checked out he figured he'd just set a new record for Costco. He had all of the Kools they had in stock, and at least enough food for a family of 4 for a year. Ron preferred Camel's, but that was essentially the only difference in what the two men bought. Well almost. Linda smoked too so Ron spent \$1,200 more than Gary. He hoped that Linda could get by on 40 cartons of cigarettes. Clarence made a separate trip to buy cigarettes and medical supplies. He returned to the tract with every bandage and over the counter remedy he could buy.

Ron had boosted his supply of physicians sample to a year's worth. The drugs he had to buy were written to permit him to buy a one-year supply in a single purchase. That

put a dent in the old wallet. Gary had not only a one-year supply of all of his and Sharon's drugs, but a case each of 1,000 ml bags of lactated Ringers and normal saline. His doctor had even purchased them for him to get him a good price. The doctor refused to give him morphine, but Gary had been refilling his monthly prescription for 100 Vicodin ES faithfully for a long time. He hadn't taken any since August of 2003, so he was pretty well stocked.

The US was in one hell of a mess. Except for five locations, all of the hydrogen weapons had exploded east of the Mississippi. The eastern part of the country was hot and getting hotter as the radioactive clouds drifted in from the west. If you weren't in an underground shelter, you were in deep kimchi. Even mopped up to level 4, the military had to limit the amount of time they could spend in the open. The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs advised Bush that they'd located his father, Carter and Ford. Clinton was in New York City when the bombs hit and his wife and Senator Kerry were in Boston. Oh well.

The problem was transportation, the General said. Everything within a couple hundred miles of a blast had been subject to EMP. They could fly his father and Ford in, but they'd have to wait and send one of those aircraft to Plains. Bush told the General that he really wanted Carter there, so make it a priority. Condie Rice had made it to Mount Weather and she told Bush that the earlier estimates were probably going to be low for the cities on the eastern seaboard.

The drifting clouds of radiation from the west were compounding the problem as they dropped their fallout on top of the existing fallout. It would be 2 weeks, she told him, before it was safe to send out the military in force. She recommended that he order the military to go to ground and wait out the decay for the two weeks. It would be just plain stupid she said, to kill off the military in a hopeless cause. Bush gave the order to button up for 2 weeks.

Derek's unit had traveled non-stop to the Seattle area. They had stopped about 30 miles south of Seattle when they began to pick up a slight increase in the background radiation. When Captain Burger checked in by radio, he was told of the President's order to button up for two weeks. They made their way to the Weyerhaeuser Company headquarters and moved inside the building for shelter. It began to rain, a common Seattle phenomenon, and they were more than happy to be out of the weather. The rain quickly washed the radiation from the air and the background radiation began to fall.

At Moon Shadows, everyone had their portable radios turned to the Lancaster station. The announcer had reported Bush's announcement that the military was being held back for two weeks to allow the radiation to decay. Bush, in an unprecedented move, had gathered the surviving former President's as an advisory group and they were with the President at Mount Weather.

The announcer then explained the rule of seven's. The rule of thumb, he explained, was that it was generally considered safe to come out of shelter after 7x7x7 hours. 343 hours was 14+ days, so that probably explained Bush's order for the military to hunker

down for 2 weeks.

Gary turned off his radio. There they went speculating again. Couldn't they just report the news? He dug out his old Road Atlas and marked the cities that had been hit on the US map. The Chinese must have had it in for the liberals and politicians, he mused; they sure took out a lot of them. He wondered how they had managed to get the ex-Presidents to Mt. Weather; it was only 50 miles from DC. (It hadn't been easy.)

It didn't look like they were going to have trouble for a while at least; but those folks in the Midwest were in for it, he was sure of that. The heartland produced a lot of food. Gary was right, sort of, but it was December and the heartland had trouble planting underneath the snow. The only crop in the ground was the winter wheat.

Across the US, many prudent people were holed up in their basements. They had food, water and firearms. The March 24th attacks on California and Nevada had been a wakeup call. The Ebola outbreak had been a loud gong reinforcing the lesson. Those that had survived the Ebola outbreak had begun to store food and water and gun sales had been brisk.

The surviving baby boomers could remember the 1950's and a different America. They implemented their own Civil Defense program and pressed their children to do the same. After the two weeks had passed, looting became commonplace. Looters who attempted to enter the homes of the prudent baby boomers were met with a blast from a shotgun.

With the radioactive fallout diminished to a near safe level, Bush ordered the troops out in force. They rounded up survivors and placed them in the hastily erected FEMA camps. Most of the people placed in the camps had nothing but the clothes on their backs. Some were suffering from radiation sickness and they were isolated. FEMA was having difficulty gathering food and the residents of the camps were on short rations in the beginning. Nobody starved, but excess body fat was becoming a thing of the past.

The men returned to Los Angeles to resume the rebuilding effort. All of the rubble in downtown Los Angeles and the Port at Long Beach had been cleared and buildings that had survived the bombs were being repaired. Those that hadn't had been torn down and weren't scheduled to be replaced anytime soon. The epicenter of the bomb had apparently been Parker Center. Oh well, maybe LAPD could design a new badge. The bomb at Long Beach had been set in the vicinity of the old Star-Kist plant on Terminal Island. The only serious damage there had been to some of the container unloaders.

Ron, Clarence and Gary were sitting in Chris's garage poring over a US map.

"I'm sure glad we're in southern California and not in the southeastern US," Ron commented. "The people must be pouring into those areas."

"I wouldn't be so sure of that," Gary opined, "The high altitude bursts probably took out a

lot of late model vehicles with those electronic ignitions. And, according to the radio, the military is rounding up survivors.”

“If what happened to us is any example,” Ron countered, “They won’t be rounding up people with a place to stay and adequate food and shelter. My take on the radio stories is that the camps are being filled with a whole bunch of poor folks and low-lives.”

“Just being poor don’t make you a low-life Ron,” Clarence objected.

“I didn’t mean it that way, Clarence,” Ron replied, “I said and, not low-life poor folks.”

“Just keep it straight in your mind,” Clarence admonished.

In fact, FEMA had established relocation centers a long way from the destruction. People were being bused to Oklahoma, Texas and New Mexico. Long caravans of diesel busses hauled the survivors far from the destruction and plunked them down in the middle of nowhere.

FEMA was short on staff and the military had been pressed into service to run the camps. Some genius in Mt. Weather issued an order to run the camps one notch up from basic training camps. No regard was given to reassembling families that had become separated in the disaster. Families that had stayed together were allowed to stay together, but the military didn’t have the resources to try and identify family members and reassemble the families.

Initially grateful just to have someplace to stay free of the fallout, the camp residents soon recovered and began to press the Army to locate their missing family members. The word of the growing unrest in the camps soon reached Mt. Weather. Carter urged George to create a computer database and try to match up the families. Ford agreed with Carter. Father Bush was silent on the subject at the meetings; he had his son’s ear after the meetings were over.

H. Dubya advised Dubya that Carter’s idea had merit but that the project was too massive an undertaking under the circumstances. Barbara settled the question, telling her son that it didn’t matter what his father thought, he had to try and get the families back together.

George issued the order for the military to survey the survivors and input the information into a database. His computer whizzes developed a simple Microsoft Access database program and distributed it to the camps. They also designed a simple survey form that elicited the minimal information required for the databases. The overworked military personnel grudgingly handed out the questionnaires and assigned some company clerks to input the data. At the end of each day, the data was uploaded into a mainframe at Mt. Weather and combined and sorted. Slowly families were matched and the data fed down to the camps.

By that time, there were over 100 relocation centers, camps, located in Texas, Oklahoma and New Mexico. The military was faced with a logistics nightmare. Some of the families were spread over two or three camps, sometimes in different states. They faced the inevitable questions: Which camp did they reconstitute the family in; how did they transport the various family members between camps in face of a growing fuel shortage; why weren't the people simply happy to be alive and fed, couldn't the families reunite later? Nobody thought of opening a new camp for the families and simply transporting everyone to the new location.

The camp southwest of Albuquerque was the first to explode. By May, the residents had had enough. The Army wasn't doing enough to rejoin the families and the food was getting in shorter and shorter supply. May of 2005 was especially warm and when the thermometer hit 85 degrees, tempers flared.

The residents overwhelmed the skimpy military detachment, helped themselves to whatever food and weapons they could find and headed out toward their homes. All, that is, but the small group of men and women who had actually instigated the riot. These people were not the cream of the crop nor were their names likely to be found on any social registers. Now, if you looked at police rap sheets, you wouldn't have any trouble finding their names. They managed to get the lion's share of the weapons and food and they headed west to the sunny climate of California.

They'd heard about Phoenix, Tempe and Mesa and stayed south traveling I-10, Tucson being their first stop. Tucson wasn't expecting trouble and before word of the breakout hit the radio, the group was in their city. The first stop the group made was at a gunshop where they rounded out their firepower and loaded up on ammunition. They didn't leave any witnesses who could describe them later to authorities.

Using the money they had relieved the gun store's cash register of, they stopped at a market and loaded up on food. Their final stop was a Wal-Mart where they purchased camping equipment. As they were leaving Tucson northbound on I-10, an Arizona state trooper tried to pull them over. The trooper figured something was wrong because none of the people in the 4 Humvees appeared to be military. The trooper was barely out of his car when he went down in a hail of automatic weapons fire.

They pushed the 4 Humvees as fast as they would go, and were just south of the I-8 interchange when they ran into a roadblock of Arizona state troopers and deputies from the Pinal County Sheriff's office. The group had the LEO's out gunned and after a brief firefight collected the dead officers' weapons and jumped on I-8 westbound. They'd lost 3 people dead and had left the two wounded behind. There wasn't any particular loyalty in this group of people.

They made the 3-hour drive to Yuma unaccosted, stopping in the small town of Noah, AZ to dump the Humvees and to steal new vehicles. The state of Arizona was on the lookout for the Humvees and they slipped across the state line into California unnoticed. At El Centro, the 19 remaining people turned north on state 86 headed towards Indio.



At Moon Shadows, Ron heard the first announcement of the riot and subsequent events at the FEMA camp at Lordsburg. According to the radio, a group of people had seized weapons and 4 Humvees and headed west on I-10. Apparently the people had stuck up a gun store in Tucson and killed an Arizona trooper on the north side of Tucson. The last actual contact anyone had with them was at the I-8 junction south of Phoenix. They'd killed 2 deputies and 6 troopers. Four of the group was dead and a fifth was barely alive. A statewide manhunt was underway to locate the remaining 20 (estimated) people.

Ron walked across the street to Gary's house. He knocked and let himself in. Gary was sitting at his computer in the office typing something, it looked like a letter or a novel.

"What are doing?" Ron asked.

"Typing," Gary volunteered.

"I can see that dope," Ron replied, "What are you typing?"

"It's a story called The Ark," Gary said, "It's all about us and an intentional community we start in Colorado. What's up?"

"I just heard on the radio about a riot and breakout at a FEMA camp in Lordsburg," Ron said.

"Where's Lordsburg?" Gary asked.

"Southern New Mexico. Just east of the Arizona line. There must have been about 2-dozen of them grabbed some guns and Humvees. They lost them south of Phoenix at the I-8 junction," Ron recapped.

"Are they headed our way?" Gary asked.

"Hard to say, Gar-bear," Ron summarized, "There's a statewide manhunt going in Arizona. They could have gone north to Phoenix or west on I-8."

"If they went north, they'd drive right into Tempe, Ron," Gary replied, "I'd put my money on them going west on I-8."

"But that would take them to San Diego," Ron countered, "That wouldn't be any better than Phoenix."

"There're a lot of turnoffs between the I-10 and San Diego Ron," Gary said, "Maybe they turned south for Mexico."

"Maybe," Ron agreed, "Or maybe they turned north."

"I was just leaving for Costco, want to ride along?" Gary said.

"What do you need at Costco?" Ron asked.

"Just want to fill in a little and buy some meat," Gary said, "Those kids of mine probably didn't eat a lot of meat when they were living on their own, but now it's not a meal without meat."

"That sounds familiar," Ron said, "Let me check with Linda to see what we need and I'll see if Clarence wants to ride along."

"Meet me outside in 10 minutes," Gary said. Gary had been driving a little, and carried his Arizona wallet in his left rear pocket and his California wallet in his right rear pocket. He emptied the trunk and back seat of the car while he waited for Ron and Clarence.

Ron and Clarence walked out of the house. Gary called them over.

"Hop in," Gary said.

"But you don't have a drivers license," Ron protested.

"Not in my right pocket, no," Gary laughed.

When they arrived at Costco, Gary loaded up on the ground meat. If the kids wanted steak, they could buy it themselves. Out of deference to Sharon, he bought some pork and chicken plus several boneless beef roasts. He put a dozen cans of coffee, 100# of flour, 25# of sugar and 20 cartons of Kools on the flatbed.

He hated to shop, just as many men do. Ron got the things on Linda's list and he and Clarence loaded up on cigarettes, too. On the way home, they swung by the gun store and Ron picked up another handgun and a case of ammo for it. For some reason, Ron was really into handguns, but didn't much care for long arms. Gary bought 2 more M1A's. You could never have enough battle rifles!

After they'd gotten home and unloaded, Sharon made them coffee and they turned on the radio. The announcer said that the Arizona state police had located the Humvees in the little town of Noah, AZ. They were speculating that the group had crossed into California. The three men refilled their coffee cups and went down to Chris's garage where the police scanner was. They listened for any news of the group from the FEMA camp.

Two of the FEMA group were brothers from Bakersfield, California. They had persuaded the others that they could get lost in Bakersfield and the group was headed there. They planned to go the back way, picking up I-10 and taking it to I-215 north. From there, they would take state 138 to the 14 freeway and the 14 to Avenue D. Avenue D would take them to I-5 and I-5 to state 99 north. They planned on being in Bakersfield before

dark.

When the 4 cars turned off I-215 onto state 138, an alert motorist who had been following the drama on his radio spotted the four cars with Arizona plates. He drove over to the weigh station and notified the CHP that 4 cars with Arizona plates were headed north on 138. The CHP put out a broadcast and the three men heard it on the police scanner.

“Hell’s bells,” Ron said, “If they are on 138, they’ll be coming right by here. Maybe we should get the golf carts and park them at the 47th street stoplight. They won’t stand a chance against the SAWs.” [47th Street East is state 138]

“I’m going to end up dead one of these days,” Gary thought, “Ron must think we’re the Tenth Calvary or something.”

They drove over to the intersection of Avenue R and 47th street east. Ron took the east side of the street and Gary and Clarence stayed on the west side. About 20 minutes later, Ron and Gary both spotted a car with Arizona plates northbound on 47th Street East from Avenue R-8. The 3 cars right behind also had Arizona plates.

Ron spoke into the business radio, “That’s them,” and when the cars came past Avenue R-4, the 3 men opened up with the SAWs. The ambush lasted all of 30 seconds, tops. The 3 drove their golf carts down to the cars, gathered the weapons and headed back to the tract. By the time the Sheriff’s Deputies arrived nearly 10 minutes later, they were sitting in Chris’s garage drinking coffee and pretending to play cards.

A Deputy Sheriff pulled into the tract a few minutes later.

“Did you guys hear the shooting?” he asked.

“Yep,” Ron said, “We drove our golf carts down to the end of the street and watched over the fence. A whole bunch of people we didn’t recognize ambushed those cars. They took the guns and ran. Say was that the bunch from the FEMA camp down in New Mexico?”

“It was and those vehicles look like they’d been stitched with machine gun fire,” the Deputy said, “Mind if I check those Army SAWs you have mounted on the golf carts?”

“Help yourself Deputy (we put the dirty guns away and the clean guns on the carts), you’ll find that they haven’t been fired,” Ron said.

The Deputy checked the SAWs. They hadn’t been fired recently nor did they smell of cleaning solution.

“I still don’t understand how you people have machine guns and the Sheriff let’s you keep them,” the Deputy complained.

“The SAWs belong to the Army and Captain Burger worked out something with the Sheriff,” Gary said, “Ask the Sheriff.”

“Never mind,” the Deputy said. He got in his car and left.

“He’d have really crapped his pants if he knew about the silencers we have for the 4 M-4s,” Gary laughed.

## The Survivalist – Chapter 9 – Peace?

It was May 31st; the 12th day since he'd purchased the M1A's and Gary was chomping at the bit to get to the gun store to pick them up. Ron agreed to take him but Ron had a bad case of the go slows. If Ron didn't show up in five minutes, Gary was going to ask Sharon to take him or drive himself. He just started to ask Sharon when Ron stuck his head in the door.

"Ready to go?" Ron asked.

"For maybe 20 minutes already," Gary snapped. "I hate waiting. I remember when you could walk into a store and walk out with a firearm as long as you were old enough and had the price."

"I was thinking about buying another handgun," Ron said.

"What for?" Gary said, "You have 14 handguns and 2 hands."

"Funny Gary, real funny," Ron said, "You can never have enough handguns. One might jam or something."

"That won't wash Ronald," Gary said in a fake stern voice, "Under that theory, you'd have to carry all 14 guns at one time to be sure."

"And why do you have 4 M1A's?" Ron asked.

"Because I want 4 M1A's," Gary said. "It has nothing to do with how many I can shoot at one time. If you were honest, the reason you have 14 handguns is because you want 14 handguns, it's as simple as that."

"It is, isn't it," Ron said, closing the subject.

They arrived at the store and went inside. Ron was immediately attracted to a nickel-plated .38 auto with pearl grips. Gary picked up his two rifles and bought 6 800-round cases of Aussie surplus. After he'd taken his rifles to the car and they loaded the ammo for him he went back inside.

"You don't want that gun Ron," Gary said.

"Why not, I think it's pretty sharp," Ron responded.

"You remember what George C. Scott said in *Patton*, don't you?" Gary asked.

"No," Ron replied, "What did he say?"

"A reporter asked Patton about the grips on his gun, suggesting that they were pearl,"

Gary explained, "Patton, said, '*They're ivory. Only a pimp from a cheap New Orleans whorehouse would carry a pearl-handled pistol.*'"

Ron handed the gun back to the clerk. "Let me see that Kimber over there," he said pointing to another gun. Ron ended up buying the Kimber and was told he could pick it up on June 17th.

"You ought to carry that Kimber instead of the SAA," Gary suggested.

"You carry a .357 SAA Gary," Ron said.

"That's different," Gary protested.

"How's it different?" Ron pushed.

"I can't shoot the .44 Magnum anymore because of my hands," Gary explained, "And the .357 SAA fits my hand better than the Pythons. My hand is too short to hold them properly. Did you ever notice where the trigger on the Pythons hits my finger?"

"Why don't you just buy a .45 Auto?" Ron asked.

"I will if you can talk Sharon into it," Gary offered.

"I'll trade you that new Kimber for your 4" Python," Ron offered.

"Deal," Gary said.

They were home so Ron stacked the ammo in Gary's garage and Gary put the rifles in his second gun case. Gary got the Python out of the pistol case and handed it to Ron.

"I've got a holster for that, too but I'll have to dig it out," Gary said.

"Do you have any speed loaders?" Ron asked.

"8, I'll toss in 4," Gary said.

"I'll give you 4 8-round mags for the Kimber, that will make us even," Ron said.

The FEMA camp in Lordsburg was just the first of many camps to have problems. The military got smart real quick and began moving complete families to the Lordsburg camp. That gave them room in other camps and by the end of June that issue had been resolved. The US had also solved the food distribution problems and the people were eating pretty well considering the cooks were military.

They were still trying to clean up the cities hit with two bombs, but the cities that took a single hit were cleaning up nicely. Those cities had a ground zero of a little over a mile.

The biggest problem was getting rid of the hot metal. There was no consensus as to whether or not they would rebuild the cities. New York might not rebuild.

Considering the problems they'd had after the World Trade Center attacks, they were estimating that the rebuild could take over 20 years and run in the hundreds of billions. It was the same with most of the cities hit by two warheads. It would take too long and cost too much to rebuild them.

The almost final death toll from the nuclear onslaught was near 45 million. Almost because the long term effects of the radiation had yet to be determined. That put the total deaths at 71 million counting the a-bombs and the Ebola attack. If there was an upside, and you had to be grim to think that way, the loss of 71 million Americans meant that there were sufficient houses for all of the American people.

Fewer industrial plants had been destroyed than people first thought. It was simply a matter of relocating people to the cities where the jobs and housing were. If only it were that simple. Probably 70 percent of the vehicles in the country didn't run because of the EMP from the blasts over the large cities. Many of the power grids were down and there were insufficient transformers and other components to rebuild the systems quickly. Communities were being brought back online one at a time.

The Iowa National Guard unit was finally relieved in Seattle and they traveled back to the Los Angeles area to pick up their tanks. Captain Burger came by the housing tract and told them that he was sorry but they would have to turn in the 4 generators, 6 SAW's, 122 M-16's and M-4s, the 4 Berettas and the munitions he had given them.

The guys hated to see the military hardware go, but they had little choice in the matter. Of course, they still had the extra hardware they'd picked up from the groups that attacked them or that they'd attacked, but they were losing a major portion of their arsenal. They had to give back all 300 cases of 5.56x45mm ammo and the 40mm grenades.

The Captain didn't know about the stuff Derek had sneaked to his dad so they still had the dozen M-203's and the 40mm grenades Derek had supplied. Their net gain on the deal was the 72 cases of 5.56x45mm ammo that the military forgot they delivered, the weapons they'd gotten from the Lordsburg bunch, and those they'd gotten from the first attack. They just have to live with only having 16 M-4s. Everyone in the tract was armed with his or her own battle rifles, Mini-14's, shotguns and pistols; it wasn't as if they were defenseless.

Clarence, Gary and Ron gave Chris 4 of the M-4s. They mounted the M-203's on the remaining dozen M-4s and divided the 72 cases evenly with each of the 4 getting 18 cases. The 3 of them each took 24 40mm grenades. Gary has those 200 M-16 magazines that he'd bought and made sure that each of the other three had 16 magazines per rifle.

Ron had come through with the Kimber when the waiting period was up and the three of them had put up the Marlins and SAA's. When the neighbors all became convinced that the crisis was passed, they asked the razor wire company to remove the razor wire. The final insult came when Johnny stopped by and told them they had to give back the golf carts to the golf course. Clarence and Lucy moved back to their home, Ron and Linda and the boys to theirs and life returned to 'normal'.

[Author's comment: I hate the M-16 and its DI gas system. It's still better than a baseball bat. Four cases of M193 are 3,600 rounds.]

The day that Lorrie and Amy left was a joy. Gary and Sharon gave them each  $\frac{1}{3}$  of the food just so they wouldn't have an excuse to come back. They added an M1A, a shotgun and magazines and ammo. The kids were on their own.

About a month later Gary called Ron up and told he need a major favor; could Ron come over and talk about it? Ron showed up about 2 hours later and they sat down for coffee. Gary explained that he needed to go to Tucson and to Elko, Nevada.

The place he had been using for an address in Phoenix was out of business and the place he used in Vegas had gone up with the a-bomb. Could Ron haul him around while he cleaned up his loose ends? Gary would pay all expenses. Ron wasn't all for the idea but Gary told him he'd make it worth his while. Ron promised to talk to Linda and let him know. It was a week before Ron called back and told him the trip was on.

They left for Tucson 2 days later. Ron didn't like long trips and it took them 2 days to get to Tucson. After they checked in to a motel, Gary started hunting the yellow pages. He found a private mailbox company that would let him use suite, apartment number or whatever he wanted to identify his private mailbox. The next day, Gary rented a box for 3 years and then had Ron take him to a Tucson DMV office. He registered his address change with the state of Arizona. He then took Ron by a gun store and told Ron that he'd buy Ron whatever large capacity magazines he wanted. Gary hadn't counted on the store having a large stock of pre-ban magazines and Ron took advantage of it.

The next day they headed for Elko. That ended up taking 3 days. Once in Elko, Gary went through the same routine patching up his fake Nevada identity. He'd mailed papers from Tucson to change his Arizona passport and he did the same in Elko. Ron wanted to go to Reno, he did love the tables, and that added an extra day to the trip. By the time they got back to Palmdale, both of them were ready to spend a week in their easy chairs.

With free time on his hands, Gary dug out his M-4s and mounted the Surefire suppressor adaptors. He had intended on giving Ron one of the suppressors, which was what he'd meant when he said he'd make it worth Ron's while to take him on the trip. But, by the time Ron was done buying pre-ban mags, he'd bought himself out of the suppressor.



Sharon had always wanted the linen closet rebuilt, so Gary hired a handyman to make the modification. He showed the guy what Sharon wanted and took him aside and explained how he wanted that modified. They moved the back wall of the linen closet back 6 inches and made the linen closet 3 inches shallow from what Sharon had wanted. The missing nine inches held Gary's 4 suppressed full auto M-4A1s with the M-203's attached. It wasn't until Sharon caught him putting the firearms away that she realized that Gary had used the construction project as an excuse to conceal his illegal weapons.

Though it seemed that peace was returning to the country, our Survivalist friend wasn't convinced. The next item on his purchase schedule was a Remington M-24 SWS. He started saving for the rifle and looking for a source where he could buy the weapon. Then, there would be the problem of getting the barrel threaded in a  $\frac{5}{8}$ "x24 thread so he could mount a suppressor and actually acquiring the suppressor.

Six months later he had the rifle with suppressor mounted in his special gun case. His next challenge was to get a 3rd generation night sight for the weapon. That ended with him getting an AN/PVS-27 MUNS night scope that mounted in front of the Zeiss Victory FL Diavari 6 - 24 x 72 T\* scope. Ron was still on his handgun kick and he had more oddball handguns in more oddball calibers than seemed reasonable. Ron drove them to the range once a week and they maintained their shooting skills.

Once in a while, they talked about all that they had been through during the nightmare, as Ron called it. It seemed that Ron was losing his edge and/or desire to maintain his survivalist footing. Ron wanted to unload the M-4s because they made him nervous. Ron wanted to unload the 12kw generator because it was just too big. Gary told Ron he'd take the M-4s and he'd swap his 7kw generator for the 12kw generator and pay Ron \$1,000 to boot. Then, Gary gave his 21 ft<sup>3</sup> upright freezer to Lorrie and bought 2 21 ft<sup>3</sup> chest freezers.

He continued to prepare as if nothing had happened to the US and the worst was still to come. Sharon and he bought a vacuum sealer and they watched the papers for sales on meat and vegetables. Whenever they could get a really good price on something they liked, they buy a lot of it, vacuum seal it and add it to the freezers.

Ron converted his backyard shed to a gunroom. He had two gun safes and a cleaning bench. He was complaining to Gary that he didn't have room for all of the 5.56x45mm ammo he'd bought and Gary offered him 50 cents on the dollar for the excess. Gary liked Ron's idea and they emptied the 8'x12' shed in their backyard and Gary moved all of his ammo to the shed. He hadn't realized how much ammo he had accumulated. He stacked it on one wall and put in office supply cabinets on the opposite wall. There was no way he could afford gun safes.

It was a period of another peace dividend, as least that's what Gary called it. Chris didn't want the M-4s anymore and neither did Clarence. Gary gave them a home. His more liberal neighbors returned to their pre-war concepts of not wanting the battle rifles,

assault rifles and home defense shotguns around. Gary's armory grew because he'd told everyone to take them to a gun dealer, get the dealer's best offer and he'd beat it. The dealers were generally offering about  $\frac{2}{3}$  of wholesale. Gary offered  $\frac{3}{4}$  of wholesale and none of the transactions were recorded. He offered them 40 cents on the dollar for their ammunition. His backyard shed filled and threatened to overflow.

A friend who was an electrician put in an automatic transfer switch and rigged the electric starter equipped 12kw generators so that the second would kick in if the first failed for any reason. Gary had a contractor install 4 300-gallon fuel tanks, but only filled one. Gas and diesel prices had come down to 3.25 a gallon for regular and diesel. Still that meant almost \$1,000 to fill a tank at pump prices and only slightly less at home delivery prices. He added Pri-D to the fuel tank and bought several gallons of the stabilizer for future use.

The stock markets were finally reopened late in 2006 and companies began to pay the deferred dividends they had accumulated. The Iowa bank was very conservative and in the period after the California bombings, had moved most of the trust principal to governmental bonds. They were carrying some deferred dividends on the books. When he received the unexpected dividend income, Gary filled the other 3 fuel tanks.

With the exception of a population reduced by 75 million, the radiation claimed another 4 million lives, the US had returned to near normal. Prices were very high for everything. The European countries had seized the Middle Eastern oil fields and the US had all of the oil it wanted.

The price for fuel remained high because the Europeans taxed every barrel of oil they delivered. Congress changed many of the environment protectionist laws, eliminating the mandates for fuel additives and opening Alaska for more oil development. The Japanese began to sell cars with highly efficient engines that didn't require an engine computer. They gave you 45-mpg city and 60-mpg highway. Americans rushed to replace their automobiles.

The conflict started in Eastern Europe. The Hungarians and Poles got into some sort of trade dispute. It was one of those nonsensical things that were usually resolved between the businesses. Then the Hungarian government stuck its nose in. The Polish government, naturally, came to the defense of its Warsaw based corporation and things slowly escalated from there.

If that weren't enough, the Czechs and Slovaks had a long running dispute over a 17-kilometer section of border. They had been discussing the matter for years, neither side giving a millimeter, but keeping the dispute on a civil plane. The Hungarians began to publicly support the Slovaks and Poland sided with the Czech Republic. It threatened to spill over into the former Yugoslavia. When the Austrians announced support for the Czech Republic and Poland, Germany was sucked into the conflict also in support of the Czech Republic and Poland.

The conflict was a battle of words to this point. There were so many current issues and old wounds that the EU tried to stay out of it. It might have settled down had not the French decided to side with Hungary and the Slovaks. The new United Nations, reformed in Brussels, Belgium tried to intervene. The US had abandoned the UN, considering it a failed experience after the Iraqi conflict. The looming war sent the London stock market into a tailspin and the US market followed soon thereafter.

The US belonged neither to the UN nor NATO, but maintained its close ties with Great Britain and Great Britain had never joined the EU. The countries began to arm themselves just as they had a century earlier. The Germans tried to invoke a treaty provision with Great Britain and Tony Blair, still hanging on to his seat in Parliament managed to persuade Parliament to deny the German request. The stage was set, in the early spring of 2008, for another war in Europe.

In the spring of 2008 back in Palmdale, California things were taking on the appearance of normalcy, ala pre-2004. Moon Shadows had regressed to a herd of sheeple, except for their resident survivalist who now owned more guns than a gun store, had 2 freezers full of meat and vegetables, had replaced the falling down wood slat fence with a 6' tall concrete block fence and turned his lot into a veritable fortress.

Most of the people were half mad at him over the gun issue. He had paid them more than any dealer would have, but they blamed him for getting them to buy the guns in the first place. Ron had had another heart attack and died a second time, but as before was revived and had open-heart surgery for a second time. He refused to stop smoking and preferred the fatty cuts of beef. He was doing fine, now, but at 67 was running a tad slower.

Clarence had a heart attack and when he was coming out of bypass surgery, experienced a stroke. He was doing well, but his diabetes interfered with his leg healing. He had taken up walking just as the Doctor had ordered but didn't bandage his leg over the deep scar from where they took the vein. The wound stuck to his white socks and he reopening the wound. This had led to an infection that the doctors were battling. He had an IV lock in his left arm and Lucy had to give him injections of antibiotics twice a day. Clarence was 69 years old.

Five years of daily insulin injections, advancing age and perhaps a tinge of senility had changed the once happy-go-lucky Gary into the worst grouch one could imagine. Maybe that explained why he'd ringed his lot with a 6' high block wall. He'd given up watching TV because every time one of the announcers started to create news, he wanted to shoot the TV screen and put the SOB out of his misery.

At 65, the once moderately outgoing man had become reclusive and rarely ventured from his little fortress. He'd finally put in a Ham radio, having had a license since 1992 but never having a radio. He'd raised three 39' telescoping steel masts thru his slatted patio cover and had an 11-meter ground plane on one, a Diamond X700HNA 146/440Mhz dual-bander on the second and a MFJ-1798 75/80, 40, 30, 20, 17, 15, 12,

10, 6 and 2 Meters on the third. The fourth mast had the rotor but the antenna had been backordered. It was a MFJ-1775 Low profile 14', 7' turning radius, 40, 20, 15, 10, 6, 2 Meter half wave mini dipole.

He'd picked up a used Yaesu FT-847 radio with accessories that he used as a base station. He had a Uniden AM/SSB CB base station and a 100-watt linear amplifier for it. He could talk to the world; he didn't, though, preferring to sit and listen by the hour. A friend tried to get him into RTTY and Packet Radio, but he declined. Sharon had sprung for an ICOM IC-R8500 for him for Christmas and he rarely turned on the Yaesu radio anymore. The ICOM's antenna, a D-130J was mounted on the 5<sup>th</sup> 39' mast. The Ham who had installed everything for him had insisted on RG-213/U milspec cable. Whatever, all the wires looked alike to him.

Ron called and was on his way over.

"Heard from Clarence lately?" Ron asked after they sat down for coffee.

"He called last night Ron," Gary reported, "He's having one hell of a time with his leg where they took the vein. He's getting IV antibiotics and taking 2 Vicodin ES twice a day. He didn't sound good at all."

"What is he? 69? 70?" Ron asked.

"69 I think," Gary replied. "The three of us are staggered 2 years apart."

"Are you still on your Screw TV kick?" Ron asked.

"Cotton pickin' announcers..." Gary started to say.

"I figured as much," Ron laughed, then got serious.

"So you don't really know what's going on in the world do you?" Ron summarized.

"Not really Ron," Gary admitted, "I've gotten a little reclusive."

"Really?" Ron said "I hadn't noticed (in a pig's eye)."

"It's not our day to go shooting and you surely didn't drive over here to ask about Clarence, so what's up?" Gary asked, mellowing.

"All hell is breaking loose in Europe Gary," Ron summarized, "It started out small but has escalated to the point where it sounds like Germany is about to declare war on England and France."

"We'll, Bush pulled us out of the UN and NATO, so I don't see how that affects us," Gary said.

"It wouldn't, but according to Fox News, Tony Blair has asked Bush for support if Germany does declare war on Great Britain."

"Bush is a lame duck," Gary countered, "He'll never get us into a war."

"You're probably right about that Gar-bear," Ron agreed. "The thing is that the Republicans don't have a good candidate for 2008 and it looks like Edwards is the Democrats candidate."

"What happened to Dean and Clark and all of those other Democrat wannabes from the 2004 primaries?" Gary asked.

"They didn't get enough primary votes among them this year to win the race for dog-catcher," Ron laughed. "Anyway, do you still have those M-4s?"

"Does a bear poop in the woods? Of course I do!" Gary smiled, "You decide that you gave up on them a little early?"

"Well..." Ron half acknowledged.

"I have the 4 carbines, the magazines and even your ammo all marked with your name," Gary explained. "Do you want the stuff now?"

"If you wouldn't mind, yes" Ron admitted.

Gary got out a 2 wheeler and they went to the shed to haul Ron's ammo. Ron's was all stacked in a column, 2 rows deep with 'RG' written on the boxes. Gary then led Ron to the linen closet and tripped the latch revealing his illegal guns.

"Jeez," Ron said, "Did you get Clarence's and Chris's back too?"

"Yep. Everyone turned sheeple on me," Gary commented.

"What's in the case?" Ron asked.

"Never showed you that Ron," Gary said, "That's a Remington M-24 SWS complete with suppressor and 3rd generation night optics."

"Ever shoot it?" Ron asked.

"Just in the back yard," Gary admitted. "I have that backstop Chris built for us and I shot it a couple of times with the suppressor on. I really need to get it to a range and check out the long distance sighting."

"Let's go tomorrow," Ron suggested.

"Ok. Let's see, you owe me," Gary said handing Ron a slip of paper.

"What's this for partner?" Ron asked.

"That's just what I paid you for the ammo I bought from you, so give me my money back," Gary explained.

"Take a check?" Ron asked.

"Got a check guarantee card?" Gary replied.

"Butthole," Ron laughed as he began to make out the check.

"You don't want the generator back, too?" Gary asked.

"Naw. I saw how yours is all wired in Gary," Ron explained, "Linda and I bought a new LP powered 20kw standby generator. I got AmeriGas to put me in 2 1,000-gallon tanks and we're good to go."

"You always liked to go first class as I remember," Gary said. "What time do you want to go to the range tomorrow?"

"I'll pick you up at 9am," Ron said. "Why don't you bring that Barrett and sight it in, too?"

"Ok, if I can pick the thing up, I will," Gary laughed.

## The Survivalist – Chapter 10 – The Europeans

Ron was on time for a change. They loaded Gary's M-24, his Barrett M-82A1M and two of his M1A's. He had .50 BMG match and .308 match ammo plus a battle pack of Aussie surplus. Ron drove them up to the range and helped Gary tote his weapons over to the table. Gary started with the M-24 and a few rounds later had it tuned in out to 800 yards.

He switched to the Barrett and sighted it in for 1,000 yards, the limit of the range. He preferred to only shoot the surplus ammo in the M1As since he only intended to use his limited supply of match ammo for his sniper rifles. He was still a pretty good shot for a Crusty Old Curmudgeon! He was Crusty and Old, but a Curmudgeon? Really! You had to consider the source, now didn't you?

Having his M-24 and Barrett sighted in did a lot to lighten his mood. Gary even laughed at one of Ron's jokes. Ron shot after Gary was finished. As he waited while Ron got his practice in Gary began to think about the cabinets filled with guns in his shed. If the Moon Shadows folks came around wanting to buy their guns back, he had half a mind to charge them full retail price. He knew that bunch of sheep wouldn't come looking until TSHTF and the ten-day waiting period for long-arms fairly demanded that they at least pay full retail. He surely didn't suffer fools lightly.

When they got back from the range, Gary set about cleaning his 4 rifles. He replaced the M-24 and the Barrett in the cabinet behind the linen closet and the M1As in his bedroom gun cabinet. Then, he took a Xanax and waited for it to kick in. About twenty minutes later he turned on the TV to CNN, his friend was right, it was the Communist News Network. And of all people, Wolf Blitzer was reporting the news.

He went to the kitchen, took another Xanax and returned to listen. Dang, Ron had been right. If you believed the spin good old Wolf was putting on it, war would break out in Europe any second. Would they call it World War III or World War IV? That little set to with China hadn't really lasted long enough to be called a World War and no one had declared war anyway; they had just gone at it. It did qualify for the shortest major war in history barely lasting for one day from the start of hostilities to finish. And the death toll had set new records.

Gary decided that it wasn't about to blow up anytime soon in Europe, regardless of what Wolf Blitzer said. He planned to talk to Sharon about maybe laying in a little more food, but it wasn't urgent. They had two years worth and rotated regularly. He thought about maybe getting some grains from Walton Feed, flour didn't really store well and Sharon was complaining.

He wouldn't mind having a well either, but with his fence, that was out of the question. He dug out the yellow pages and looked for one of those water tank companies. He called the company and they made an appointment to send a salesman out. The lady on the phone said that they didn't get that many calls for water tanks in the city.

The next day the salesman showed up right on time, 15-minutes early. Gary showed him where the copper water line ran over to where he'd had soft water for a time and the salesman persuaded him that for the cost differences, a 5,000-gallon tank was the best buy. The tanks were prefabricated and it would cost the same to install a large tank as it would to install a small tank. There was the cost of extending the water lines, a crane to lift the tank into place and the cost of the tank itself. Gary almost went for the 10,000-gallon tank, but Sharon put her foot down. The salesman had gotten confused during the conversation and they delivered a 10,000-gallon tank. Gary called and offered to pay the difference in the cost between the 5,000-gallon tank he ordered and the 10,000-gallon tank they delivered. The salesman checked with his boss. They couldn't do that, but they did offer him the 10,000-gallon tank at a substantial reduction.

"What the hell," he thought, "She won't kill me and it will double our stored water."

By the end of the day, the tank was installed and filling. Sharon got home from her sewing circle to discover Gary sitting on the patio looking at his new tank. She started to say something, but he cut her off, explaining what had happened. She didn't care really, having lived with him for 30 years; she was accustomed to his way of doing things.

They had installed a water pump for when there was no city water pressure. The pump was on now because the tank wasn't full and she enjoyed having the increased water pressure. Gary made sure to turn off the pump before he went to bed, the tank would be full in the morning and the pump wouldn't be needed. The only thing that concerned him was the one time high water bill. Oh well.

Gary spent a lot of time listening to BBC, he could only stomach so much of CNN and Fox. The British were raising holy hell because George had turned down Tony. They were even talking about a possible non-confidence vote in the Parliament. Blair kept assuring the public that when the chips were down, America would support the mother country.

Bush campaigned for the Republican candidate, but those who had watched the President for 8 years could tell his heart wasn't in it. Summer turned to fall and with the approach of winter the American electorate went to the polls to cast their ballots. Edwards won in a landslide. Blair began to solicit the President-elect.

The German Chancellor was assassinated on February 14, 1898. The assassin was a Hungarian born Jew, a student attending school at Frankfurt's Johann Wolfgang Goethe-University. The crowd killed the student before the German Police could arrest him. Germany blamed Hungary and began to mobilize its troops.

The acting German Chancellor called upon Great Britain to support its war effort against Hungary. Blair turned him down flat. The German, Czech, Polish and Austrian armies began to move against Hungary, Slovakia and France on February 19th.



France declared war against Great Britain, again, and Blair pled with the new American President to support the British. Edwards went to the leaders of the Democratic Congress and they supported US involvement by a narrow margin. Not waiting for a vote from Congress, Edwards dispatched the Atlantic Fleet to Great Britain. After the war with the Chinese, the 6th Fleet had been reassigned to the Atlantic Fleet, so it was a mighty armada that sailed from America on the 21st day of February.

When the fleet sailed, the French also declared war on the US. Congress felt it had no choice and declared war against France, Hungary, and the Slovakia. Russia declared itself to be neutral, but secretly began to funnel aid to Hungary and Slovakia. American Los Angeles class submarines sunk the French fleet and the battle was joined. Britain, through no choice of its own, found itself supporting the Germans after all. NATO, the UN and the EU were hopelessly divided and decided to stay out of the fray.

The new Secretary of Homeland Defense, former General Wesley Clark, raised the threat condition from green to blue and soon thereafter to yellow. The nation quietly slipped from DEFCON 5 to DEFCON 4. CNN interrupted its regular programming to announce that the US was at war with France, Hungary and Slovakia.

Gary's order from Walton Feed was delivered. He'd ordered 2 of the Deluxe 1 Year Food Storage Units for 1, item U030. He had also purchased a Deluxe Golden Grain electric Wheat Grinder. He would have bought the Country Living Mill except that by the time he bought the electric motor and extras, it cost twice as much as the one he selected. He got Sharon to drive him to Costco and they picked up 8 gallons of oil per the directions that came with the Walton order.

Sharon had a fit when she saw how many beans were included in the Walton order. She said that if she ate one more bean she'd turn into a bean. Gary explained that the Walton food had a long shelf life and it was their emergency backup food supply. He suggested that with the war starting in Europe and that Democrat putting the US into it that the US could end up rationing food like they did in the 1940's.

He suggested that they go to the store and pick up a variety of garden seeds just in case they needed to plant a garden. She pointed out that all they had was a shovel to turn the soil and they ended up getting not only a large variety of seeds, but also a tiller.

Because of the massive destruction wrought on the US and China by the WMDs, several countries had decommissioned all of their nuclear weapons and were dismantling them. Only the US and Russia had any WMDs any longer and the remaining US stock pile had shrunk considerably because no replacements were built for those used against the Chinese.

Did I forget to mention Israel? No one knew how many nuclear weapons the Israelis had in the first place. The destruction of Tel Aviv and the deaths of so many Muslims had gotten the surviving Israelis and the Middle East out of the news. They had been so careful in recruiting the Hungarian student that no one could link him to them. The inju-

ries the student had received at the hands of the crowd in Frankfurt had obliterated the small puncture mark where the Mossad had injected the shellfish toxin. They were home free, and they still had 126 nuclear weapons at Dimona.

As the northern European countries moved against the southern European countries, they met with stiff resistance. Though outnumbered, France, Hungary and Slovakia put up fierce resistance. Well, Slovakia and Hungary did anyway. The French moved their troops to the front lines, but logistics problems left them ill prepared to fight. Somehow they managed and the advance was halted, the Mirage fighters holding the German panzers at bay.

President Edwards issued a call up of American reserves and National Guard units. Derek had dropped out of the Iowa National Guard. Between Kosovo, Los Angeles and Seattle, he'd seen enough of war and its aftermath to last him a lifetime. His employer in Des Moines hadn't kept Derek's job as required by law and Derek was too tired to fight him over it.

After a series of temporary jobs, Derek and Mary sold their home and headed to California. They were in route when the German attack began. The realtor's commission had eaten up most of the equity they had in their home and by the time they reached Palmdale, they were down to their last \$100. Gary was so happy to see Derek he didn't care about anything else. He took Derek and Mary to the mobile home park adjoining Moon Shadows, Grecian Isles, and rented them a trailer, paying the lot rent and the trailer rent for a full year. Gary wished that Damon were in California, too. Derek explained that Damon was still 'finding himself'. Gary hadn't realized that Damon was lost.

Gary and Derek took Mary's Dodge pickup to Costco and Sam's Club the next day and Gary stocked Derek and Mary's pantry. They bought so much that they ended up storing a major portion in Gary's garage. Their purchases were made just in time because that evening, Wolf Blitzer announced that Edwards was implementing food, tire and gasoline rationing.

Ration books were being printed and distributed. Rationing would take effect in 3 days. Gary wrote down the tire sizes for their car and Mary's pickup. His good friend, Tim, sold him two sets of tires out the back door of the Goodyear, formerly Winston, Tire store. Gary bought the lifetime balance and road hazard warranty for the tires so that when they were needed Tim could mount and balance the tires free of charge.

Ron was making similar preparations. He knew Tim too and he bought 2 sets of tires, one for his car and one for Linda's. He went to Pep Boys and loaded up on air and oil filters, spark plugs and oil. He called Gary and suggested that he do the same and Gary and Derek headed for Pep Boys immediately.

They'd used up the 24 55-gallon drums of gasoline and all of the 5-gallon cans of gas, so Gary and Derek loaded the empty drums onto Mary's pickup and went from station to station, buying as much diesel as they were allowed. Some stations were imposing

strict limits and others didn't care. They filled the 12 drums on the pickup, drove home, used Chris's engine hoist to unload them and loaded the other 12 drums. They had to go as far as Santa Clarita to get the drums filled. They unloaded those drums and set out to fill the 27 5-gallon gas cans. The 2,220 gallons of diesel including 3 fuel tanks plus 135 gallons of gas in cans plus the gas tanks were full. Their cash supply was getting low, but his family was ready for anything.

Gary showed his hidden gun case to Derek. Derek wanted to know where the M-4s came from; the Iowa Guard had picked everything up.

"They didn't have any record of the 72 cases of 5.56x45mm ammo, nor the M-203's you sent up while you were in LA Derek," Gary explained. "That bunch that escaped from the FEMA camp that we took out had 16 M-4s and I stashed them. You also forgot about the Surefire suppressors and the 6-dozen 40mm grenades and I learned to never volunteer. What would you like for weapons?"

"Could I get 1 M1A and 1 suppressed M-4?" Derek asked.

"Sure. How about handguns? I've got a surplus of Browning Hi-Power," Gary answered.

"No Berettas?" Derek asked. "I'm qualified Expert on the M9."

Gary laughed and fetched two M9s from his pistol case. He'd acquired 6 15-round magazines for the Berettas and gave those and some web gear to Derek. Derek took 10 M-14 magazines and an 800 round case of Aussie surplus 7.62x51mm. He took 14 mags for the M-4s and two cases of Iowa's 5.56x45mm ammo. A case of 9mm ball rounded out his armory.

"Why don't you, Mary and the kids come to supper tonight," Gary suggested, "There are some things we need to visit about."

"Sure Dad, we're not totally unpacked yet anyway," Derek replied.

After dinner, Gary took Derek to this shed and opened the supply cabinets. There were 4 cabinets, one held MBR's, the second Mini-14's, the third shotguns and .22 rifles and the fourth handguns and a vast assortment of rifle and pistol magazines. Gary explained to Derek that his neighbor's had all turned sheeple on him and he had bought up their guns at about 75% of wholesale.

A \$1,000 rifle wholesaled for \$600 and he'd paid \$450 for it, for example. None of the firearms were on the books. Gary had also, he explained, bought up their ammo for 40 cents on the dollar. Several of the families had moved out of Moon Shadows so even if people wanted their guns back, he would still have a pretty good inventory. They went back to the house and sat down at the kitchen table.

"What I wanted to talk to you about was my concertina," Gary said.

“What concertina?” Derek asked.

“I bought up a pickup load of concertina from a metal dealer,” Gary explained, “The thing is, I don’t know how to hang it on my fence. If you want, you can do that in your free time until you find a job. You’d better plan on getting a job as close to the tract as you can too, because you’ll probably have to ride a bike to work.”

Derek got a job as a parts man at Pep Boys, which was less than 2 miles from the tract. During the evenings and on one weekend, he strung the concertina for his Dad. Chris and Matt had been down; they brought Gary the 25-watt business radio, the antenna, cable and the police scanner. Chris’s wanted 2 M-4s, 32 magazines and some of the 5.56x45mm ammo. Fair deal, Gary got Chris what he wanted and while Matt hauled the guns and ammo home, Gary and Chris stood around visiting.

“Are you still working for Paramount?” Gary asked.

“Yes, but I’ve had to switch from driving to the Metrolink,” Chris said, “I can’t afford to drive any more. What’s with the concertina? You’ve turned this place into a fortress.”

“Put in a 10,000 gallon water tank, too,” Gary replied. “I’ve got 2 generators, 2,200-gallons of diesel and 135-gallons of gasoline stored, too. It’s all stabilized with Pri-D and Pri-G.”

“Gary, the war is way over in Europe,” Chris protested.

“I know it Chris, but things could get pretty bad here, too.” Gary responded. “Have you stocked up on food again? Rationing starts tomorrow.”

“Patti made a run to Costco and Sam’s Club but I don’t know what she bought,” Chris replied.

“If you have the money, I’d make sure to stock up before the stores close tonight Chris,” Gary said, “Tomorrow, you’ll be eating at the pleasure of the Democrats.”

Chris asked Patti about the food when he got home. She was way ahead of him. She burned through most of their savings, but there was plenty of food, over a year’s worth. She’d bought Gary’s old 21 cu. ft. freezer from Lorrie when Lorrie and David needed money and she had it packed full of meat. She’d borrowed Sharon’s vacuum sealer and the meat was well protected from freezer burn. Patti walked down to Sharon’s and confronted Gary in his office.

“Hey,” she said.

“Hey what?” Gary asked.

“Gimme one of those rifles like you gave Chris and I want 3 automatics.” Patti said.

“Do you mean semi-auto pistols?” Gary asked.

“Whatever you call them, I want 3,” Patti replied.

Gary went to the shed and retrieved 3 Browning Hi-Powers, 9 magazines, web gear for 3 people and returned to the house. He handed Patti the web gear and took an M-4 out of the linen closet case. He retrieved 16 magazines for the M-4 and put them in a shopping bag. He then got his two-wheeler and brought 4 cases of 5.56×45mm ammo, all marked CP, and 2 cases of 9mm and wheeled the ammo down to Chris and Patti’s house.

“I already picked up 2 rifles, Patti,” Chris protested when Gary and Patti appeared.

“Yeah, 2,” Patti said, “And no automatics, either.”

Chris would have gone to the garage to sulk, but he was already in the garage. He unloaded the ammo, locked the Brownings in a cabinet and went into the house to sulk.

Gary went back home and turned on the TV. Thank goodness, it was Aaron Brown for a change. Gary listened to the news about the war in Europe and the coverage of a food riot that had broken out in New Jersey while people were trying to stock up before the rationing went into effect. Gary was still muttering under his breath about the way the Democrats had implemented rationing when Sharon came in and changed the TV to a Law & Order rerun.

They got enough rationed gas at \$4.599 a gallon to drive to the store once a week to pick up their meager food allotment. You couldn’t get meat or butter and had to settle for skim milk. They hardly drove anywhere and Gary carefully siphoned off the extra gas in his tank into one of 2 empty 55-gallon drums he’d found. You only got 4-gallons of gasoline a week and black market gas went for \$10 a gallon.

The Democratic Congress had pushed through a temporary ban on the sale of firearms and the waiting period went from 10 or 15 days to infinite. Derek also drained his tank into his Dad’s barrels. They only drove to get gas and food, too.

Gary had a steady customer for his 6 extra gallons of gas every week. He also had a healthy gun business running out of his shed. The guns were suddenly worth twice the MSRP, or more, if the person were desperate enough. It wasn’t that Gary was profiteering from other people’s misery; it was more a case of him profiteering on their short-sightedness.

He tilled the entire back yard and had a pretty good business going on vegetables too, from people who wouldn’t or couldn’t take the time to grow their own. He turned some of his profits into chickens and soon chicken coops covered most of his patio. That gave

him eggs and meat to sell. Jury rigged out of scrap 2x4's and some chicken wire he'd had the foresight to buy, the Crusty Old Curmudgeon was making out like a bandit.

Ron and Gary had to give up their weekly trips to the range, they refused to use the gas and it was much too far for the two old men to walk or even ride a bike. That was ok with them; the 5.56x45mm ammo was going for 50 cents a round and the .308 surplus for 90 cents a round, if you could find it. That was near a military base; away from a base, ammo went for a flat buck a round for the common calibers and a hell of a lot more for unusual calibers. Chris was doing a land office business in LA on .308 and 5.56x45mm ammo at 50 cents a round.

The war in Europe had stagnated because neither the British nor the Americans were willing to commit ground troops. Actual British and American participation was limited to the use of their aircraft to bomb the French. Supplies were flown to Germany from England and the Germans distributed the supplies from there. Edwards hesitated to commit American ground forces because American industry was still recovering from the earlier events that had ravaged America. Parliament flatly refused Blair's request to commit British ground troops.

Finally, in desperation, the Germans threatened to use nuclear weapons. There was no evidence that the Germans even had any nuclear weapons so Edwards and Blair dismissed the threat. They didn't know that the Israelis had sold six low-yield nuclear devices to German through a cutout. The Israelis wanted the Germans to use the nuclear weapons because they were sure that were they to do so, Russia would enter the war against Germany.

The Germans also feared that Russia would enter the war if they used the weapons and in an eleventh hour gambit showed the weapons to an American Air Force General attending a staff meeting in Berlin. The General immediately informed his chain of command of the existence of the weapons and Edwards found himself forced to commit ground forces. When Edwards capitulated, the British Parliament was forced to do the same.

*Back in Palmdale, Gary, Ron and Chris were visiting about their business ventures.*

"I suppose that many people are critical of us for taking advantage of the situation," Gary said, "I can't bring myself to see it that way. I've only taken the market value of everything I've, we've, sold."

"Buying a rifle for \$450 and selling for \$2,000 does make for a handsome profit," Ron laughed. "I've been selling handguns for 3 times what I paid for them. I figure the war will be over eventually and I can replace them dirt cheap."

"You know, I haven't had one person try to buy a firearm who was prepared," Gary responded. "The thing that gets me was that they all had guns after 2004 but sold them off when things took an upturn after the China thing. It almost bankrupted Sharon and me

buying up all of those guns, but it looks like our retirement will be pretty good after this war is over.”

“Speaking of the war,” Chris said, “Did you see where Edwards is committing ground troops?”

“I hadn’t seen that,” Gary replied, “I just happy that Derek is out of the Guard. One trip to Europe is enough for any man to have to suffer through. I nearly went nuts waiting for him to get back from Kosovo.”

“How many guns do you have left Gary?” Ron asked.

“There are 3 Remington riot guns, a few .38 revolvers and no rifles Ron,” Gary replied.

“Jeez, I didn’t know you’d sold that many,” Ron said.

“Yep, I sold 34 M1A at \$3,300 each, 15 Garand’s for \$2,000 each, 63 Mini-14’s for \$1,500 each and around 50 handguns, give or take, and got between \$1,000 and \$1,500 each for those, depending on condition. All told, I got a little over \$200,000 for the guns. We’ve sold 75,000 rounds of 5.56×45mm at an average of 45 cents a round and about 20,000 rounds of Aussie surplus at 90 cents a round average. All together, I have just over \$252,000 in cash from armament sales alone. Then there’s the gasoline I’ve been making over \$1 per gallon on above market. We also have the chickens, eggs and vegetables. When I counted last night I had a little over \$260,000 all together.”

“Oh man,” Ron said, “I’ve only sold 30 handguns, but I got an average of maybe \$1,300 each. I’m just shy of \$40,000. Aren’t you afraid that someone will try and break in and steal all that money?”

“The two of you are the only people that know how much I have, Ron,” Gary laughed, “You’ll be the first people I look up if someone does. Besides, I added motion detectors to the inside and outside of the fence. Anyone who gets within 10’ feet of this place triggers an alarm.”

“Are you sure you’re not crazy?” Chris laughed.

## The Survivalist – Chapter 11 – War & War

“I may be crazy,” Gary replied, “Like a fox! How many days has the world been absolutely without a war somewhere? Until that thing with China the answer was almost none. America taking the Chinese out like that was a fluke. They never would have attacked us if they weren’t starving. We probably would have helped them if they asked, even in our diminished circumstances. But no, they had to take what they wanted. I think it’s really sad, to tell the truth. And this war in Europe stinks. I can’t put my finger on it, but there’s something not right about how it started.”

“What do you mean?” Ron asked.

“Well think about it Ron,” Gary explained, “WW I got started because someone assassinated Archduke Ferdinand. This is almost the same story here. It’s just too pat. Hell, I don’t know.”

“If we put in ground troops, it will sure change the character of the war,” Chris suggested. “At least we will get back at the French for betraying us after WW II and then opposing Bush’s invading Iraq.”

“I’m not totally convinced that they weren’t right when they opposed our invading Iraq,” Ron said, “Not that I agree, understand, but it seems like Bush was just cleaning up after Daddy.”

Gary’s mind had drifted. “You know, someone asked me today if I still had any guns,” he remarked out of the blue.

“What did you tell them?” Ron asked.

“Oh, I pointed out that I still had half the guns we took off the people from Lordsburg plus my personal guns,” Gary replied absently.

“I sure hope you didn’t tell them what we took off those people from Lordsburg,” Ron replied excitedly.

“Nope. The three of us, Derek and Clarence are the only people that know. Oh, and Sharon saw them, so she knows, too,” Gary replied.

“That’s good,” Ron said relieved, “You have too much money lying around to suit me. So do I as far as that goes; and, I don’t have a fortress like you do. We really ought to put some of that money in the bank.”

“No Sir. No way,” Gary replied quickly. “It was quite a while before Wells Fargo got back online and the branches opened. If their computer center hadn’t been in Oregon, we still might not have our money. Besides, most of the money I have is found money. I just guessed right by buying all of those guns and ammo.”



“You know, we’re running quite a risk having automatic weapons, especially in California,” Chris said.

“Then bring them back, Chris,” Gary said, “I can probably get 4 grand apiece out of those two M-4s.”

“I didn’t say I was unwilling to run the risk Gary,” Chris replied. “I’ll take the risk. I may be slow, but I am not stupid.”

The Supreme Commander Allied Powers Europe was tasked with forming the invasion plan for the Northern European powers. His choices were narrow, go for France or go for Slovakia and Hungary. The latter seemed to be the obvious choice, being the smaller area, but the logistics of moving so many troops and matériel were staggering. The final decision was to launch the attack from Krakow, Poland.

A firm push through Slovakia would put the combined American and British force into Budapest in less than a week. That is, provided the Germans and Czechs kept the Slovaks bottled up in western Slovakia. The Austrians had forced the French back to France, denying Hungary and Slovakia anything but French air support. The American Air Force moved its aircraft to Stuttgart and Munich for rearward defense and to Vienna for forward assault. The 82nd Airborne was positioned for the initial assault to be closely followed by the 101st Air Calvary.

When everyone and everything was in place, the US commenced phase I, the air campaign, ala the 1st and 2nd Gulf wars. When the French Air Force rose to combat the American air campaign, the rearward defense aircraft intercepted them. The fight between the American and French air forces was fierce, but the Americans maintained a respectable 9.5 to 1 kill ratio. Patriot III missile batteries were being brought in as rapidly as possible and they could intercept French aircraft and missiles. The French were thus unable to prevent the air assault being waged by the Americans forward air to ground assault aircraft. As the forward assault took its toll, the German panzer units began to gain ground. The 82nd was parachuted into Slovakia and they began a pincer movement. The 101st joined in the fray and the Slovaks began to be overwhelmed. As the German, Polish, and Czech forces brought the Slovaks to task, the American Air Force shifted its mission from Slovakia to Hungary and began softening the Hungarians.

The French bravely fought on with their Air Force and their ground forces once again assaulted the Austrians. German and British aircraft relieved the US Air Force and the American defensive air assets were shifted to support the air assault on Hungary. American B-52’s and B-1B’s carpet bombed the dug in Hungarian troops while the Germans, Poles and Czechs finished off Slovakia and moved their troops to support the Austrians and begin a ground assault against the Hungarians.

Surprisingly the Russians remained neutral and the Hungarian Army began to falter. The campaign against Slovakia and Hungary lasted 2 months, but in the end, Germany,

Poland, the Czech Republic, Great Britain and the US prevailed. Towards the end, the American forces withdrew and regrouped, preparing for an assault on France.

France had lost most of its Navy to the Los Angeles class submarines and most of its Air Force trying to support Slovakia and Hungary. After three weeks of maintenance and resupply, the US Air Force was ready to begin attacking France from the east and the Atlantic Fleet Carriers were ready to attack from the west. Facing what it believed was its inevitable doom France sued for peace. The US Congress and the President demanded and received an unconditional surrender from France, Hungary and Slovakia.

In Jerusalem, tempers flared over the failure of the plot to get the French to take down Germany. Anyone with half a brain would have known that the French could never defeat the Germans, let alone an alliance that included Great Britain and the US.

The head of the Mossad retired rather unexpectedly. Israel tried to repurchase the six nuclear weapons from Germany, but Germany had already sold them to the US for \$60 million, the price they'd paid the Israelis. For the first time, the US actually had six Israeli nuclear weapons in its possession and the military quickly dismantled the bombs to see how they were constructed.

In Palmdale, Gary, Ron, Clarence and Chris greeted the end of the war in Europe with mixed enthusiasm. It appeared that the Democratic President and Congress were not going to lift the temporary ban on the sale of firearms. The National Rifle Association sued to challenge the law on the grounds that absent a national emergency, the law was a clear violation of the 2nd Amendment. The NRA had picked the correct forum and the federal District Court held for the Plaintiff. The Appeals Court reversed and the NRA took the issue to the Supreme Court. The Supreme Court heard the issue in October of 2009.

Clarence finally healed and was able to rejoin his friends. He chose the wrong day to do it, however. Sharon's old Dell computer's hard drive had crashed. Gary installed his spare 60 Gb drive and was in the process of reinstalling the software on the computer. He didn't have any problem with the Operating System, Windows XP, installing, or any of the software. He connected to the Internet ok, too, through his 2Wire home portal after he installed the 2Wire software.

He had forgotten the problems he'd experienced years before when he first got the computer and began to experience the same problems. He did remember the problems he had trying to get tech support, those were memories that would never go away. He had called the 800 number and ended up talking to some guy in Bombay or somewhere. After an hour, the man finally realized that it was a software problem and transferred Gary to software support.

After 30 more minutes, the software support guy, probably sitting in the chair next to the first man, told him that he needed to call a special number between the hours of 8am to 5pm CST. Then next day, he had called the number and it was disconnected. He called

his sales rep twice and after an hour on the phone finally got to talk to a genuine American in Florida. The guy couldn't help him either, explaining that Gary would have to pay to get the new computer to work on his home network.

Gary went through the roof. Then he remembered one comment the man had made and took a chance. He had the Windows XP print drivers on a CD and had copied them to the new Dell computer. He had run one of the self-extracting zip files and clicked on the "setup.exe" file. Five minutes later his HP 9000 printer was installed on her new computer. He repeated the process for a second printer and it installed without a hitch. So, Gary tried to mentally recount what he'd done 5 years before and he got her computer up and running. Clarence showed up just after Gary had the system restored. Gary was still dinking around trying to get the computers to recognize each other.

"Hey, Gary," Clarence said, "How are you doing?" Clarence shouldn't have asked because for the next 45 minutes Gary told him, in detail.

It took every ounce of Clarence's strength and character not to laugh at Gary. Gary had been dealing with computers since 1983 and thought he was pretty sharp. And maybe he had been, once. But, that had been a long time ago and Clarence didn't have the heart to tell Gary that he was just out of date.

Gary felt a whole lot better having been able to complain to someone, anyone, about his computer woes. After Clarence had patiently listened, Gary changed the subject.

"What do you think of the Supreme Court case Clarence? Do you think the NRA will win?" Gary asked.

"I sure hope so, Gary," Clarence wished aloud. "If'n they takes away the right to buy firearms, I expect they's going to start a revolt. After all the trouble the country's been through, I think we have them outnumbered."

"Who is them, Clarence," Gary asked.

"Ya know, the peoples that are dead set against guns," Clarence answered. "They just don't got no brains. I been meaning to ask, you still have the M-4s?"

"Sure do man," Gary smiled, "You wanting some?"

"Well, yes and no," Clarence said. "I don't have any use for a machine gun at the moment, but you sort of stick out like a sore thumb. They's be coming to knock down your door if'n the Court rules against the NRA."

"How many do you want, Clarence?" Gary asked.

"Maybe one for me and one for Lucy," Clarence said, "And the magazines and ammo, too."

“You want a suppressor on one of them?” Gary asked.

“They don’t send ya to jail for any longer cause ya got the silencer, so sure, why not,” Clarence smiled.

“Clarence, the thing is I sold off all the Iowa ammo. I can let you have some that I bought from some sheeple for just what I gave them for it,” Gary explained.

“Hey, Gary, no problem,” Clarence replied, “Knowing you, that’ll be cheap.”

Gary went to the shed and got Clarence 8-1,000 round cases of 5.56×45mm ammo and some web gear. He then retrieved 2 of the M-4s from his special storage spot behind the linen closet and Clarence wheeled the ammo out to his car while Gary carried the carbines. They stowed everything in the trunk and went back into the house.

“I feel better now, Gary,” Clarence grinned. “Cept I don’t reckon they’ll find those guns anyhow the way you have them stored. How many guns you have left besides what’s in your gun cases and that storage compartment?”

“I only have 3 shotguns and some .38 revolvers left,” Gary replied, “Why?”

“I suppose you want a pretty penny for those shotguns, huh?” Clarence asked.

“Are they for you?” Gary inquired.

“Of course,” Clarence said, “Rifles no good for close up work.”

“Come with me,” Gary said leading Clarence to the shed. Gary pulled out 2 riot guns and set two 250-round cases of 3”, 15-pellet, 00 Buck, a case of slugs and a box of less than lethal shells on his two-wheeler. He wheeled the ammo to Clarence’s car and Clarence brought up the rear carrying the shotguns.

“I wouldn’t have the heart to charge you for this stuff,” Gary said, “Take it and thanks giving.”

“Well ok, thank you!” Clarence said, “But what are the fancy shells for?”

“Keep a less than lethal round in the chamber and one in the tube, pal,” Gary advised. “It won’t go through your walls and if you need the bigger stuff all you have to do is pump the action. I start by loading a slug, then a 00 shell and rotating. If you have a questionable shooting situation, the courts look favorably on your starting out with the less than lethal shells.”

After Clarence left, Gary went out to the shed and moved the remaining ammo to the empty storage cabinets. He had 23 cases of Aussie surplus 7.62×51mm, 51 cases of

5.56x45mm, and 12 assorted cases of 12-gauge shells. He placed the miscellaneous ammo in the shelved cabinet where he stored the remaining revolvers and took the riot gun to the house. He decided that as soon as he could unload the .38 revolvers, he was out of the gun business, at least for now. The next day, his favorite lady from the gun store called. Did he know where she could buy some guns? Any guns at all would do. He invited her over and sold her the .38 revolvers at a discount, only 150% of retail.

That night at supper Sharon thanked him profusely for getting her computer running again. She wanted to make a suggestion she said. How did he feel about rebuilding the west wall of her office/sewing room, she asked, it would make a great place to hide his guns if that bunch of jerks at the Supreme Court ruled against the NRA. Gary was thinking along the same lines but had a different wall in mind.

How about, he suggested, they redo the wall between his office and the garage and build in some cabinets? It wouldn't take up much more room in the office and if they used the same carpenter, the guy would build it to match the linen closet. No, she said, she wanted the cabinets in her sewing room. They resolved it by using the wall Sharon wanted but putting cabinets on both sides of the wall. Ten days later, our survivalist apparently didn't own a single firearm. Since they'd done both rooms, he had 18" of dead space between the two sets of cabinets.

The US Supreme Court issued its ruling in June of 2010. On a divided 5-4 hotly dissented ruling, it upheld the Congress and President. The majority ruled that the 2nd Amendment only gave the states the right to maintain militias, the National Guard. That night, someone bombed the Supreme Court Building. The President sent the FBI to guard the Justices, but they were too late. The Justice who had represented the swing vote on the bench was found murdered. President Edwards immediately ordered the BATF to begin seizing firearms using its records of pre-war sales. They were to arrest anyone who resisted turning over their firearms.

It was the middle of the night and someone was ringing his gate bell. Gary pulled on his robe and turned on the lights. Ron was standing at the gate and he looked worried.

"Did you hear about the Supreme Court ruling?" Ron asked excitedly.

"Yeah, big deal," Gary replied grumpily. "What do you want in the middle of the night?"

"Edwards ordered the ATF to seize all guns," Ron explained, "Some reporter got wind of it and Fox news reported it about ½ hour ago. I have all my guns, do you have anywhere to hide them for me?"

"Oh crap," Gary said awakening instantly. "Bring them in and call Clarence. I'll go see Chris and get his guns."

Chris didn't appreciate being awakened in the middle of the night either, at least not until Gary explained. He got the 3 M-4s and their other guns and hauled them down to

Gary's. By dawn, Gary had retrieved the gun's he'd given Amy, Lorrie and Derek. The only problem was the ammo. There was so much of it.

Chris got a shovel from his garage and started digging in Gary's garden right next to the lip of the patio slab. Matt pitched in and they dug for several hours, opening a space under the slab 6-foot square and 6-foot deep. They hammered together some 2x4s to support the slab and stored the ammo in the space. While they did that, David and his boys and Derek spread the excess dirt over the garden and rototilled it in. By noon, not only was the ammo safely tucked away, the garden was ready for planting. Each box of ammo had been wrapped in 2-layers of black trash bags to prevent moisture from getting to the boxes.

Ron and Gary were high on the ATF's list. When they arrived, Gary and Sharon were in the back yard, planting the garden. Although they had intended on a no-knock entrance, the concertina and heavy gate held them off while Gary went to open the gate for them. An agent roughly pulled Gary aside to hand him the search warrant. Gary told the man that they didn't need a warrant, help themselves. They cuffed him and sat him down in the swing on the front patio while they searched first the house, then the garage and finally the shed.

"Where are all the guns Mr. Olsen?" the lead agent asked after their search had come up fruitless.

"I'm getting too old to play with guns anymore boys," Gary said, "I sold them all off."

"We'll need the names of all the people you sold them to," the agent insisted.

"Hey, no problem, fellas, their names were John Smith," Gary replied seriously.

By this time, it was Saturday; most of the neighborhood was gathered at Gary and Sharon's front gate. Upset by the highhanded tactics of the ATF, the neighbors began to raise a ruckus. Darlene had called her attorney and the lawyer came immediately. The attorney asked the ATF what they'd found. Nothing he was told. Had Mr. Olsen been uncooperative in any way, he asked. Not at all, the lead ATF agent said.

The attorney told the lead agent that they were done there and if they didn't vacate the premise, he'd call the Sheriff and have them removed. Reluctantly, they removed the cuffs and released Gary. Darlene gave her attorney Ron's address and he left immediately to find a search in progress. They were different agents, but it was the same drill. They reluctantly released Ron when their search came up empty.

Back in Los Angeles, the two lead agents compared notes. Both men had thick files containing copies of all of their purchase records. It didn't matter that the records were a clear violation of the law.

"I know both those SOB's are dirty," the senior agent told the two lead agents.

“Boss, we couldn’t find a thing,” the agent in charge of searching Gary’s home said, “The shed was there with the cabinets, just like we heard, but there wasn’t a single fire-arm or round of ammo anywhere.”

“Same thing here, boss,” the other agent said, “Green had a shed and it had cleaning equipment, but there wasn’t a single gun or any ammo.”

“You should have seen Olsen’s house, boss,” the first agent said, “He had a 7’ fence around his entire lot, concertina wire attached, motion detectors and a dog.”

“What kind of dog?” the senior agent asked, “Was it an attack dog? Did it bite you?”

“No, it was one of those fluffy little white dogs,” the agent admitted, “Friendly as hell. But she peed on my leg.”

“I don’t think that quite comes to the threshold for an assault,” the senior agent replied barely able to suppress his laughter.

Darlene was over at Patti’s the next day when Gary came down to see if Chris was home from work yet.

“Darlene, what do I owe that attorney of yours?” Gary asked.

“Nothing Gary, he’s an Endowment member of the NRA just like you are,” Darlene said, “He was more than happy to do it. He told me it was worth it just to see the look on those ATF agents’ faces. By the way, what did you do with all of your guns?”

“I sold a lot of guns during the war Darlene,” Gary said.

“Then they’re all gone huh?” Darlene said.

“YOU could say that Darlene,” Gary said and thought, “But I couldn’t.”

“Chris doesn’t get home until after 6pm Gary.” Patti added, “Not since he started riding Metrolink.”

Gary gave Patti and quizzical look. She knew what he wanted to know, “Does Darlene know anything?” She gently shook her head no.

## The Survivalist – Chapter 12 – Excesses

The guns and ammo were safe, at least for the moment. Gary's slab was 64' wide, running to 6" from the property line on either side and 15' out from the house. His neighbor had poured it for him and had used #4 rebar 2' on center on the first half. They had to wait a year to put in the second half and it only had #3 rebar 2' on center, but his neighbor hadn't graded properly and the slab ranged from 5" thick to 9" thick in one spot.

Gary was pretty sure that the rebar would interfere with any sort of detectors the feds might use. The carpenter hadn't had time to build wood cabinets so the new cabinets were made of metal and covered with white enamel paint. When Sharon was out of the house, Gary moved the 16 M-4s, his Barrett and the M-24 to the new storage space. The ATF would be back every once in a while checking, of that, he was certain.

The ATF was running into resistance as they tried to collect weapons based on their records. Their search list was based on recorded firearms transactions. If the people they were going after were to be believed, the people were extremely unlucky. They'd lost the guns in boating accidents or had been robbed; many of them had claimed to sold-off the weapons in private sales. On the other hand, there was a group of people that willingly turned over their weapons. Even the ATF regarded these people with some distain. The sheep mostly had shotguns and rifles for hunting and the ATF wasn't making any progress in locating any military type weapons like main battle rifles and assault rifles.

People who had MBR's and AR's had cached their weapons and ammo; they weren't about to let the government violate their 2nd Amendment rights. Small groups of gun owners began to form, secretly, and the discussions all seem to run in the same direction. If the government didn't back off soon, the groups intended to take the law into their own hands and enforce their right to keep and bear arms at the point of a gun, just as the founding fathers had envisioned when they wrote the Bill of Rights.

The groups connected with other groups and a cell like structure linking the groups formed. Only the leader of a particular group knew whom his group was in contact with and he only had a first name, a city and the number of a pay phone. Maybe Americans watched too much TV, maybe not; in any event, they'd learned from TV shows how to create secret networks.

The final straw came when the ATF began arresting people who told them to bug off. Although the subsequent searches hadn't turned up any guns, the people were arrested and held in jail without the benefit of counsel for obstructing the ATF. One group broke two of its members out of jail. Another decided to lay in wait for the next ATF raid in their area and take out the federal agents.

Both events crystallized the underground movement and rescues of imprisoned American gun owners and ambushes of ATF agents became commonplace. Edwards attempted to enlist the support of the US military in clear violation of Posse Comitatus, but



the military commanders only gave lip service to the orders. Their oath was to the Constitution, not some politician bent on violating the Constitution.

The ATF had paid both Gary and Ron second and third visits and had come up empty. Neither man interfered with the ATF in any way. Missy, Gary's Bichon Frise, had marked each ATF agent with a drop or two of urine; apparently she didn't much care for the ATF either. Ron had narrowly avoided arrest when Tango, his German Shepard, tried to take a piece out of an ATF agent. The ATF apparently gave up on the men from Palmdale; they had troubles enough without hassling the two old men.

The election of 2010 saw many who voted for the weapons laws removed from office and replaced by the opposition candidate who invariably ran on a platform to uphold the Constitution. The House and Senate narrowly passed a bill to repeal the new firearms laws, but Edwards vetoed the bill and they lacked sufficient votes to override the veto.

So many ATF agents had been killed and the military was so ineffective in protecting the agents that Edwards issued a series of Executive Orders, which gave more power to FEMA and FEMA began to build their own goon squads. In the spring of 2011, the United States of America, having survived attacks by terrorists and China, was ripe for a second Revolution.

The small group of men called their group 'Bond's Best'. They had taken the name because one of the members lived on Moonraker Road and the street had been named from the old James Bond movie starring Roger Moore. They were just a bunch of old men waiting for old age to claim them and longing for the America of the 1950's before the liberals seized the country in a stranglehold.

They were well equipped, these tired old men, and they intended to make a statement before they left. Their first action came when 3 ATF agents showed up at Gary's to search yet a fourth time for weapons. Ron and Clarence were visiting with Gary about ambushing the feds on the 14 freeway when the black Suburban pulled up in front of Gary's house.

"I've had enough of this BS," Gary said, "I'm going to take them out. Are you with me?"

"Go for it partner," Ron said.

They rushed to Gary's office and removed 3 suppressed M-4s from the gun cache. Sharon went to the gate to open it for the ATF agents and then stepped aside when they entered the property. The 3 agents went down in a hail of suppressed gunfire that no one noticed. Ron, Gary and Clarence drug the bodies to the garden and they began to dig a hole to bury the men.

Sharon washed down the sidewalk and grass, removing the blood and gore, and the men buried the bodies in a deep grave after stripping them. They gained 3 MP5/10s and 3 10mm Glocks. They drove the vehicle to the aqueduct near Littlerock and scuttled it in

15' of water. The next day, 3 more ATF agents showed up looking for the 3 agents from the previous day. No, Gary said, they hadn't been there and since the 3 agents didn't have a search warrant, they could just leave.

Their first action a success, the three old geezers decided to go ahead with their plan to ambush ATF vehicles. Their plan was simple; Sharon and Patti parked on the shoulder of the northbound 14 just before Vasquez Rocks, the scene of so many movie scenes. The county park, with its sharply slanted rocks, was where Captain James T. Kirk had battled the Gorn.

After two days of waiting, an ATF Suburban passed the women and Patti spoke into Chris's handheld, alerting the men. Gary was lying prone at the Escondido exit with his Barrett and he put one round into the block of the Suburban when it approached him directly. Ron and Clarence were in Clarence's car, also parked on the shoulder just short of the exit and the ATF vehicle came to an abrupt stop just before them. They slipped the safeties off and sprayed the Suburban with fire from the MP5/10s; and then retrieved the agents' weapons. In the space of barely 2 minutes, everyone was headed back to Palmdale and the agents' Suburban sat on the highway, burning.

All of the weapons ended up in the cache in the wall between the bedroom and office in Gary's home. Why did 3 ATF agents have C-4 and detonators? Ron called his friend from the gun store, a member of another group of patriots. She was more than willing to trade 6 cases of 10mm ammo for the 6 10mm handguns, and she would give them \$750 per gun to boot. Bond's Best were suddenly in the gun business.

"That went well," Gary grinned.

"It was a little too open to suit my tastes," Ron cautioned, "I'd prefer not to do many more operations in broad daylight, if you don't mind."

"Hell Ron, there wasn't any traffic on the 14, \$5 a gallon gas has eliminate 99% of the traffic," Gary responded.

"I know Gary," Ron replied, "But now that we have some explosives, maybe we can do something different."

"Five pounds of C-4 (4 sticks) and 8 detonators isn't a lot of explosives. What would you suggest?" Gary asked.

"There's that National Guard Armory over there on 30th Street East," Ron suggested, "We could sneak in there in the dead of night and strip them of their weapons. Use the explosive to blow the door to their gun room."

"They have guards on duty 24/7 Ron. And, the National Guard has been good to us. You're not proposing killing anyone are you?" Clarence asked.

“Not at all. But a little bump on the noggin never hurt anyone,” Ron replied.

“We pretty old to be playing soldier,” Gary offered, “How do you want to go about this?”

“If we could get Kevin, John and Derek to help, we could be in and out of there in minutes,” Ron suggested. “Just knock the guards out and tie them up; then, we could help ourselves.”

“In the middle of the night, the guards would probably be pretty alert, wouldn’t they?” Clarence asked.

“More likely sound asleep,” Ron guessed.

Gary called Derek and asked him to come over. When Derek arrived, he outlined the discussion to Derek and asked for his opinion.

“I won’t have any part of hurting any National Guard soldiers,” Derek said. “But, if we went in the middle of the night, we might be able to surprise them and tie them up.”

“What do you think we’d find in their armory?” Gary asked.

“Probably some M-16’s and M9s and magazines,” Derek opined.

“What, nothing heavier?” Gary asked.

“It depends on the unit Dad,” Derek answered, “But you can’t count on more than that. If you get anything else, consider it a bonus.”

The men decided that they had better prepare in advance. Gary’s shed sat on a 12-foot square slab. Over the course of the next two weeks, they dug under the shed, carefully shoring it with 4x4’s as they went. They bought some  $\frac{3}{4}$ ” plywood at a lumber yard and lined the inside of the entire 10’x10’x8’ box with the plywood, strengthening the room and adding support for the slab. Gary had been writing about a clever way to conceal an entrance in his novel and he adopted the idea right out of his book. The cover to the stairway down to the room was a box filled with dirt and planted with green bean bushes. It was hinged at the back and counter weighted so that anyone could raise and lower to cover once the latch were released. Gary’s property had more secret passageways and rooms than a castle in a horror movie.

On a warm evening in early June, Bond’s Best went bowling at the bowling alley next to the Armory. When the bowling alley locked up at 2am, they went to their vehicles and waited. Around 3am, they slipped out of their vehicles and crept to the Armory. The guard watching the front entrance was sound asleep. He woke to find his hands strapped with cable ties and duct tape over his eyes and mouth.

They slipped into the Armory building and located the second guard who was sitting with his back to the door, drinking coffee. They flicked off the light switch and rushed the young man. He, too, was bound and his eyes and mouth covered with duct tape. They searched both men, but couldn't come up with the key to the Weapons room. A few well-placed whacks with a sledge hammer solved that problem. The explosives were saved for another time.

Kevin, John and Derek hauled the weapons to Mary's Dodge and Chris's pickup. The armory was just a little over 2½ miles from Moon Shadows and the men were unloading their haul at 3:30am. With the haul secured, everyone went home to get some much needed rest.

They didn't go near the cache for about 2 weeks. The dirt settled in around the edges of the cover and no one would have given the area a second glance. About two weeks after their late night adventure, Ron approached the gal who ran the gun store.

"What would you say if I told you I might have a lead on the people who robbed the Armory?" he asked.

"I'd say give them my name," she said, "I'll pay top dollar for any of those firearms I can get. Our group is way short on arms and ammo. The stuff we have excess of, like the 9mm, doesn't do us much good because we're short on 5.56×45mm and only have a few assault rifles."

"I might be willing to broker a deal between you and them, what are you offering?" Ron suggested.

"These guys are patriots Ron," She answered, "They don't have a ton of money. Probably the best I could do would be to pay MSRP for the M16's and M9s. Ammo is another story; we have a ton of 9mm and almost as much .308. Maybe a case-for-case swap?"

"I don't know if the people will go for it," Ron said, but I'll pass it along."

"So, that's what she offered fellas," Ron said. "I don't know about the case-for-case swap, but a round-for-round swap would be fair. The 5.56×45mm is 1,000 rounds per case and the .308 is only 800 round per case."

"Ron, those guns might only have a government replacement cost of under \$600 for the M-16's, but they're worth \$3-\$4 thousand apiece," Gary said. "On the other hand, if we can arm that group, maybe they'll be willing to take on the ATF, too. What do you think Clarence?"

"I say we sell them the M16's without the M203's attached for \$1,000 a pop Gary. The M9s can go for \$750 each, they aren't much good anyway. And I agree with Ron, on the round-for-round swap on the ammo. If they want more, we have enough already, so we can sell it to them for \$200 a case."

Ron called her the next day.

“They said that they would let you have rifles for \$1,000, pistols for \$750 and the ammo on a round-for-round swap,” he told her.

“We can only spare about 15 cases of 9mm Ron and 20 cases of .308,” she said, “That will leave us a little short on ammo for the rifles.”

“They said that they’d sell you more 5.56x45mm at \$200 a case,” Ron offered.

“How many rifles and how many pistols do they have?” she asked.

“They have 102 M16A2’s, and 37 M9s,” Ron added. “That would be \$129,750 plus whatever extra ammo you wanted.

“The price is right Ron, but we don’t have that kind of money,” she said, “How about 50 rifles and a swap of 31,000 rounds? We’ll buy another 19,000 rounds to give us 1,000 rounds per rifle. That’s a total of \$53,800.”

“I’m authorized to accept that offer,” Ron said, “Where and when do we make the swap?”

They worked out an arrangement to meet at the bowling alley next to the Armory the following night. The ammo was placed in the back of Mary’s Dodge and the rifles on the back seat, covered with a blanket. The gun dealer met Ron inside around 10pm and he walked her out to the Dodge. She gave him the cash and two men with her swapped out the ammo between pickups and put the pistols in the trunk of her car. (At Clarence’s insistence, they threw in the 37 M9s with 1 magazine each.) She offered \$25 each for the extra 15-round military magazines for the M9s and he sold her all they had picked up from the Armory.

That night, after their bowling outing, Ron, Gary and Clarence counted the money. They had pulled in \$55,650 from the transaction. Bond’s Best had a war chest and they still had 52 M16A2’s and 3 10mm Glocks for sale. Plus, they had another 35 M16A2’s with M203’s attached from their Armory adventure that they didn’t intend to sell. They had 10 magazines each for their 6 MP5/10s and a lot of 9mm, 10mm and .308 ammo; and, there was all of ammo stored under the patio slab. Two of the MP5’s were factory suppressed, MP5/10SD models, Ron said. The other four were the standard MP5/10s.

Congress was still working out of the Greenbrier shelter and Edwards out of Mt. Weather. Washington, DC was a total loss and after cleaning up the site, the city had been abandoned. Patriot organizations existed all over the country. The Palmdale Armory wasn’t the only Armory broken into and the patriots were armed and ready to battle the forces of evil that controlled the Presidency and kept Congress from passing any meaningful legislation.

In every state in the nation, patriot groups were challenging governmental authority. It wasn't safe for an ATF agent or FEMA representative to leave his or her office. The goon squads were being attacked with an increasing frequency. A group of rebels from Alabama wanted to shoot that SOB, Edwards, but the security at Mt. Weather was so tight there was no way in. Flying the Stars and Bars became commonplace, whether you were of southern extraction or not. Bond's Best took down their US flag and raised a reproduction of the Gadsden flag from the early days of the American Colonies.

The three old guys weren't up to much more of the heavy duty soldiering but Derek slowly gathered a cadre of people from work and around Palmdale. All people were in Derek's age group, and the old men equipped the young troops with M16A2's, magazines and ammo. The paramilitary groups in the Antelope Valley hadn't disbanded as was long believed, they had just gone underground.

The old men organized a raid on two Armories in the San Fernando Valley for the same night. Twenty-five of the young troops went to each Armory. With the rash of Armory thefts, security had been raised at the Armories and they could no longer sneak in, take out a couple of guards and load up. The troops managed to avoid killing anyone, but more than one guardsman ended up in the hospital recovering from a concussion, broken bones or a superficial gunshot.

The haul made it all worthwhile. They scored almost 300 M16A2s, about 15% of them equipped with the M203s and 71 M9s. There was no way that Gary could store all that they brought back. The troopers unloaded all of the firearms and munitions onto Gary's patio and over 40 of them began to dig under the lip of his patio while the remaining men went around town looking for 4x4's and other bracing material. In the end, 40' of the 64' slab was undermined  $\frac{2}{3}$  of the way to the house (10'). They had a storage room 10'x40' and 10' high.

Ron called his friend from the gun store asking if she could use some more M16's. She sure could, she said, but they didn't have any money to buy more guns. No problem, he told her, how many did she want? Her group needed about 40, she told him and she knew of two other AV groups that could probably use a hundred or more. He gave her Gary's address and told her to be there with a couple of trucks around 11pm. When she showed up, he gave her 150 M16A2s (plain) and 7 magazines for each rifle. The next two days found the patriots around the Antelope Valley armed and ready for bear.

There were over 900 men and women in the Antelope Valley that called themselves patriots. There were a total of 7 separate groups besides Bond's Best. The latter now numbered 67 men and women, mostly Derek's age. The three old men were the ruling Council answerable only, naturally, to their wives. At times, it was hard to tell if Ron, Clarence and Gary were running the group or Linda, Lucy and Sharon were, probably a combination of both.

Linda ran across Ron's \$40,000 he had tucked away for a rainy day and promptly spent a sizable chunk of the money on a 7' concrete block and wrought iron fence like Gary and Sharon had for both their house and Clarence and Lucy's house. Ron was ready to crap a brick over that one, but Gary covered the cost of the fence for Clarence and Lucy's home. He never told Ron what Sharon had threatened to get him to do it, but Ron didn't need to know everything.

The company that installed the wrought iron sections in the block walls on the front side of the houses also installed barbed wire facing inward and outward. The points on top of the wrought iron sections were sharpened to a very fine edge. Since they were nearly 7' off the ground, no one worried about any liability from anyone who tried to climb the fence.

President Edwards was inaccessible because he was flatly afraid to leave Mt. Weather. He decided that he would not seek, and if nominated would not run for, a second term in office. [Isn't that what Lyndon said?] Although the election was more than a year away, the continued looting of Armories convinced Edwards that he would never survive a second term in office. He wasn't so sure he'd make it through this one.

ATF and FEMA were helpless. They were being killed off like flies. The military refused to obey what they took to be unlawful orders. The federal government slowly became powerless and the states began to assert their rights. Despite the federal law, the Supreme Court ruling and the failure of Congress to override Edward's veto, the state legislatures of most of the states began to repeal their gun laws. The states of Maryland, Illinois and California were the last holdouts.

The more liberal politicians who claimed that they wouldn't be covered by a lawless mob of gun nuts eventually saw the error of their ways and capitulated or suddenly died mysterious deaths. The founding fathers expected a federal government that served at the pleasure of the states and citizens. The feds saw it differently, they were on the top of the pecking order and they would dictate to the states. Unfortunately to enforce such an attitude, you had to have brute force and the feds had none.

On March 23, 2012, Gary turned 69 years old. It was cool that day but not unpleasant. Sharon threw a barbeque and they invited all of Bond's Best and their families. The patio and house were standing room only and Gary kept expecting the patio to cave in at any moment from all of the weight. They grilled hamburgers and hotdogs and chicken. Gary climbed the steps and looked over the side fence in his back yard and saw all of his chicken coops sitting in his neighbor's back yard. "I wondered where they went," he thought, "Well, now I know."

After everyone had eaten their fill, the women and children gravitated to the house and front yard. The 50 some men were gathered on the patio. Derek pretty much ran Bond's Best now; the old men had given up the ghost around Christmas. They were content to sit around and answer questions, but when it came to action, they were just too tired. They listened as Derek outlined the next stage in the war against the feds.

## The Survivalist – Chapter 13 – Waiting Game

“I really don’t want to go up against the Army if I can avoid it,” Derek said. “It’s not that long to the elections, only 7½ months. Unless any of you seriously disagrees, I would prefer that we just keep up the campaign against the ATF and those FEMA goons.”

“But Derek, the ATF won’t come out of their offices,” Sonny Marsten, the newest member of the group, complained.

“Sonny, I think we can draw them out if we use my Dad as the bait,” Derek replied, “Are you ok with that Dad?”

Gary nodded his head and smiled, this could be fun.

“But Derek, your Dad is too old for crap like that,” Sonny protested.

“Who the hell you calling old, kid,” Gary shouted.

In a lowered voice, Sonny said to Derek, “I thought you said he was almost deaf.”

“That’s right Sonny, almost, but not completely,” Derek replied. “Look, the ATF has been here 4 or 5 times at least. They’ve never found a thing, but I know it must be eating their guts out. I’d suggest that one of us tip them off that he has a secret gun case built into his walls. That ought to get them to head up here in force. We’ll ambush them near Vasquez Rocks.”

“Does he have a secret gun case built into his walls?” Sonny asked.

“It is behind his linen closet in the hall,” Derek answered.

“I’ll volunteer,” Sonny said.

“I thought you might,” Derek thought. “I’ll show you how to get into the gun case Sonny, why don’t you call them tomorrow.” He said.

Later that evening after everyone except Clarence, Ron and their wives had left; Derek was talking to his Dad together with Ron and Clarence.

“Did you see the way he jumped on that, Dad,” Derek said, “I think maybe I was right, the AFT tried to infiltrate this group.”

“What made you suspect Sonny, Derek?” Clarence asked.

“He laid back at first, didn’t ask many questions,” Derek explained, “But lately, he’s been asking a lot of questions. A couple of the guys mentioned that he seemed to be awfully curious. Then, he started asking me questions that he didn’t need to know the answers



to.”

“That doesn’t prove anything Derek,” Ron suggested.

“True, but the ATF is very hard to get a hold of,” Derek said, “So if they show up, that means he knows how to reach them. I spent over an hour on the phone yesterday trying to get their number. Apparently it’s unlisted.”

“Couldn’t he go through the FBI or something?” Clarence suggested.

“Sure, but I didn’t tell him to tell them it was a trap, did I?” Derek replied. “Look, all we have to do is ask him if he reached them. If he had to go through the FBI or something, I’m sure he’ll complain about how hard they were to reach.”

“Well, if you say so, ok,” Clarence said. “But if you’re right, he’ll tell them it’s a trap.”

“That’s right,” Ron said. “So if he tells them it’s a trap what make you think they’ll show up at all?”

“Ron, they want you and Dad too badly to pass on it,” Derek said. “Besides, it’s not a trap, no one will be waiting at Vasquez Rocks or anywhere else. The sole purpose of this exercise is to confirm that Sonny is a spy.”

The next day at lunch time Sonny called Derek to confirm that he’d notified the ATF.

“Did you have any trouble reaching them Sonny?” Derek asked.

“No, I got right through.” Sonny replied, “Said they’d be up around 6am tomorrow. What time are we getting together to ambush them?”

“You can sit this one out Sonny,” Derek said, “The rest of us will be in place about 4:30am. I appreciate what you’ve done.”

“Hey no problem Derek,” Sonny said, “Glad to help.”

Derek rode his bike straight to his Dad’s house right after work. When he got there Ron, Clarence, Chris, Linda, Lucy and Patti were there with his Dad and Sharon.

“What’s going on?” Derek asked.

“Eight years ago today, those terrorists set off the a-bombs in California and Nevada,” Gary answered. “Then we had the Ebola virus to deal with and the Chinese invasion that never quite came off. Plus there were those gangs we had to fight. We were just sitting here remembering it all. How did it go with Sonny?”

“He called around noon,” Derek replied, “Said he got right through to the ATF and that

they would be here about 6am. Ron, Dad has told me several times how you wanted to push Tony down a mineshaft in the desert. Are there really mineshafts out there?”

“Lots of them Derek, why?” Ron asked.

“You may finally get your wish in a back handed way,” Derek answered, not elaborating.

The ATF recruited the FEMA goon squad to help them. The FEMA people left around 2am and were all set up around the Escondido Canyon exit on the 14 waiting for Bond's Best to arrive and set up the ambush. They had a squad of 32 agents plus the special agent in charge. They were so confident that they could handle the rabble that was going to make the ambush that they hadn't bothered to get a radio tuned to the frequencies the ATF used.

The ATF left the Federal Building at Wilshire and the 405 Freeway at 5am. With no traffic to slow them down, Palmdale was an easy one-hour drive. They drove through the ambush site at the Escondido exit without interference. The agent in charge, riding in the lead vehicle, radioed the other three Suburban's that FEMA had obviously succeeded. They arrived at Gary's at 5:59am. When they pulled to the curb in front of the house, Gary's motion detectors triggered his alarm system.

Gary and Sharon were up at 5am the morning of March 25th and the second pot of coffee was brewing when the alarm went off. Gary got up, went to the door and opened the gate for the ATF men. He had Missy on a leash so she couldn't attack the ATF agents. He should have had a shorter leash. The agent in charge handed Gary the search warrant and they pushed by him into the house. The senior agent went right to the linen closet, tripped the latch and pulled the linen cabinet forward to reveal an empty gun case.

“That's quite the setup you have Mr. Olsen,” the agent said, “Where are the guns?”

“I've told you and told you that I don't have any guns,” Gary responded.

One of the agents had searched the sewing room and the office and was standing with a puzzled look on his face.

“Hey boss,” he yelled, “I think Olsen has another gun case here in this wall.”

“What about it Olsen?” the lead agent asked.

“Follow me,” Gary said and led the man to his office. He tripped the latch and opened the second, larger gun case. It too was empty. “I don't believe in gun safes, agent Fink, [the guy's name was Darrell Fink] so I had these gun cases built back when I had guns. I've told you and told you I don't have any guns. You can use metal detectors, or anything you want, you won't find any guns or ammo.”

Fink had his agents get the metal detectors and ultrasonic detectors from the Suburban's. They searched until nearly noon, but came up empty handed. They thought that they had a hit on the patio, but Gary explained that the slab was full of rebar. They took a sledgehammer and pounded on the slab until they hit a piece of #4 rebar.

"I expect you to repair that damage," Gary insisted.

"Fix it yourself Olsen." Fink said, "And count yourself lucky we didn't pull down your walls."

Sonny was waiting at Carrows for the ATF agent in charge. He was expecting a huge payday, he had been promised \$5,000 for his information. Fink showed up and informed him that they hadn't found any guns so he wasn't going to get the \$5,000. The ATF only paid rewards for information that led to arrests, Fink explained. Olsen had the gun safe in the wall all right, but it was empty. As a matter of fact, he had two, why hadn't Sonny found out about the second safe?

Late that afternoon, Derek contacted Sonny and asked him to meet him at Gary's. Sonny was at first reluctant, but Derek assured him everything went just as planned, they'd moved the guns out of the wall cabinets and needed his help to bring them back to the house. Sonny arrived at Gary's around 6pm and Ron and Derek took Sonny to pick up the guns.

Ron directed Derek to an abandoned mineshaft east of Pearblossom. The three men got out and Ron led them over to the mineshaft. Sonny was confused; it didn't look like there was anywhere to store guns here. He turned to Derek to ask just as Derek thrust his knife. The thrust, intended for his back, caught him right in the gut. Derek shoved Sonny and he fell the 25' to the bottom of the shaft where he lay and bled out.

Darrell Fink was in a meeting with the head of the FEMA enforcement squad at the Federal Building.

"No one ever showed up," the FEMA agent insisted.

"That figures," Fink replied, "We spent 6 hours searching and came up empty. I think I'll pick up Marsten and question him, I think the whole thing was a setup from the git-go."

Search as they might the ATF couldn't find Sonny. They put a warrant out for his arrest and shelved the matter. About a month later they got a tip that Marsten was at the bottom of a mineshaft east of Pearblossom. Six agents went to investigate and they ended up joining Sonny at the bottom of the mineshaft. Darrell Fink was at the bottom of the pile of bodies. When the ATF agents didn't return, the remaining 6 agents from the LA office and the FEMA enforcement squad went looking. The mine barely held all of the bodies. Bond's Best shoveled dirt into the shaft afterward to hide its location.

"That went well," Derek said, "Twelve ATF agents and 33 FEMA goons. That pretty well

cleans out the LA office of the ATF and FEMA is going to have to bring in a new goon squad.”

“Yes it did,” Gary admitted, “I’ve been listening to Fox News. It sounds like patriots from all over the country have had similar ideas. Bill O’Reilly was really laying into Edwards. It sounds to me like the liberals are going to get tossed out on their ear this November. I agree that we should lay low until after the elections.”

The ATF transferred in 3 agents to staff the LA office. FEMA was unable to recruit replacements for the LA office and they ended up transferring in 6 ‘enforcement agents’. Bond’s Best took a sabbatical. The Democrats were unable to find a strong candidate from their midst and opted to run Steny Hoyer, the Senator from Maryland. The Republicans nominated Senator Rob Bishop from Utah. The election of 2012 saw a Republican landslide, giving the Republicans the largest majority in the House and Senate in recent memory.

President Bishop immediately rescinded Edward’s Executive Orders and asked Congress to revise the 2nd Amendment. The new wording of the 2nd Amendment would be simple, “The right of the people to keep and bear arms, being an individual right, shall not be infringed.” The revised Amendment was ratified by all but 3 states, Maryland, Illinois and California. The same Congress repealed the Patriot Act and repealed or revised all firearms laws on the books. The sole survivor was the National Firearms Act and it only prohibited explosive devices like hand grenades.

Gary had proven his point. If a person were prepared, they could survive through any catastrophe. Maybe not a direct hit from a bomb, but an alert person could protect him or herself against disease, war and most natural events. It was all about being prepared. He had thought himself to be prepared, but along the way discovered the holes in his defenses. Sharon gave him an unusual present for his 70th birthday. She had the concertina removed from the fence; they wouldn’t need it any more.

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